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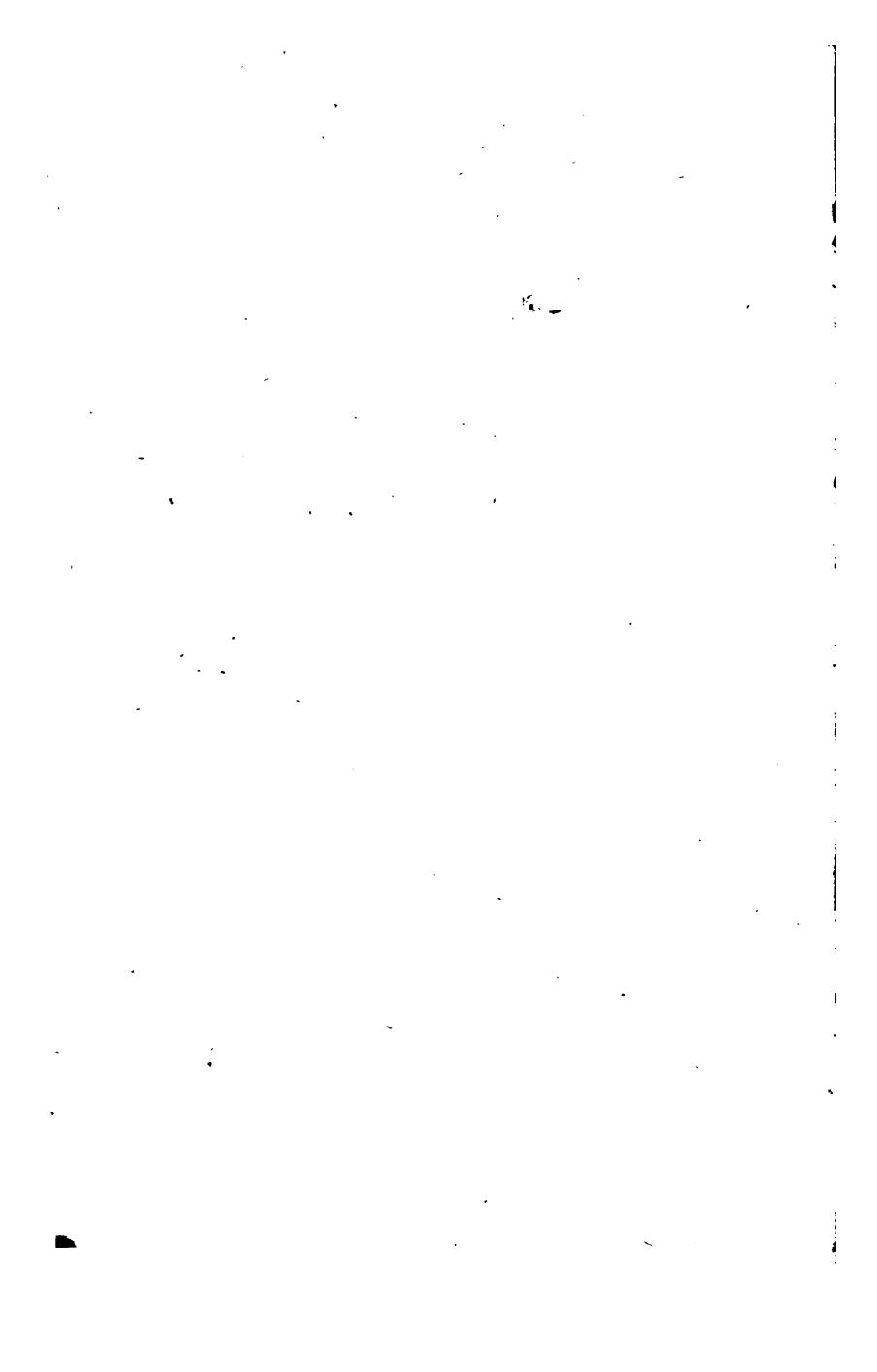
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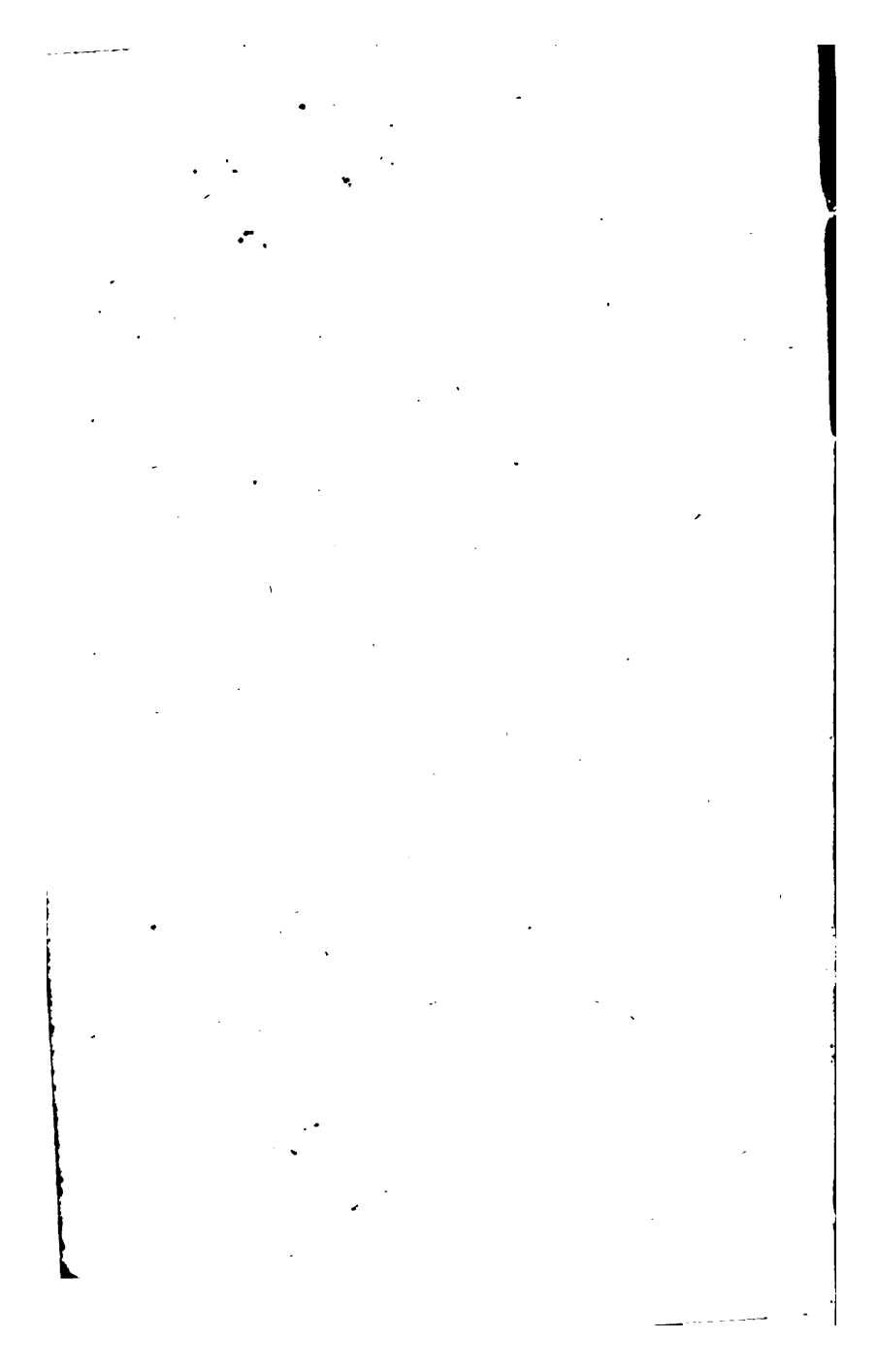
Geo Duffield

Section _____

Nº







PRINCIPLES
OF
INTERPRETING THE PROPHECIES;

Briefly Illustrated and Applied

WITH NOTES.

BY HENRY JONES.

"When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God.—HEB. 5: 12.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Of Clergymen in the City of New-York.

FROM a cursory examination of the Principles of prophetic interpretation, and the Illustration of these Principles in their application to various leading prophecies, contained in a little work prepared by the Rev. Mr. Jones, I am disposed to believe, that the publication of the work will be useful as a means of instruction and edification. It is a little work, terse, full of thought, and free from all needless verbiage.

JOHN KNOX,

Pastor of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church.
New-York, August 31, 1837.

HAVING seen a brief outline of the work on prophetic interpretation, to be published by the Rev. Mr. Jones, I concur in the above opinion expressed by Rev. Dr. Knox in its recommendation. While unable to judge of all the principles contained in it, in the reading of a condensed sketch, I hesitate not to believe that its publication will be useful.

THOMAS DE WITT,

Pastor of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church.
New-York, August 31, 1837.

I have examined "the twenty-four Principles" laid down by the Rev. Mr. Jones, in his manuscript for the Illustration of Scriptural Prophecies. They appear to me reasonable, just, and scriptural.

4-27-32 LWB

But they embrace subjects of the deepest research which come up before the mind of the Bible student. They are, therefore, not to be recommended suddenly, or upon a cursory examination; nor to be lightly set aside. It would require years of profound research in the application of these Principles to the various prophecies of the Holy Bible, fully to test their truth and establish their usefulness.

While, therefore, I cannot, of course, approve every thing in them, and determine the result of their efficient application to the evolving of Scripture Prophecy, I would earnestly recommend this little book to all my Christian friends, as an admirable manual to excite to the close and careful study of the prophetic parts of God's Holy Word. The intense labor and study which this little work must have cost its author, ought by no means to be lost to the Christian public.

W. C. BROWNLEE,

Pastor of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church.
New-York, August 31, 1837.

In the above recommendation I cordially acquiesce.

ARCHIBALD MACLAY,

Pastor Baptist Church, Mulberry-street.
New-York, September 1, 1837.

Having listened to the reading of the Principles above referred to, with a brief explanation from the author, I concur in the above recommendation by the Rev. Dr. Brownlee.

ABSALOM PETERS,

Corresponding Secretary of the A. H. M. S.
New-York, September 2, 1837.

I very cheerfully unite in the above recommendation.

J. McELROY,

Pastor Scotch Presbyterian Church, Grand-street.
New-York, September 2, 1837.

Having partially examined the Principles laid down for the

RECOMMENDATIONS.

Illustration of Scripture Prophecies, referred to in the above recommendations, I cheerfully recommend the work to the notice of the Christian community.

C. W. CARPENTER,

Pastor of Greene-street M. E. Church.

New-York, September 4, 1837.

I fully approve of the above, and cheerfully join in the same recommendations of the work to the Christian public.

JOSEPH HARRISON,

Pastor Congregational Church, Thompson-street.

New-York, September 4, 1837.

I cheerfully concur in the opinions above expressed in reference to this work, including the qualifications of Dr. Brownlee.

CHARLES K. TRUE,

Pastor of the M. E. Church, John-street.

New-York, September 5, 1837.

Having examined the work of Rev. Mr. Jones on the Interpretation of the Prophecies, as it has been passing through the press, I do not hesitate to subscribe to its recommendation as given above by the Rev. Dr. Brownlee.

JONATHAN GREENLEAF.

Cor. Sec. of the Am. Sea. Fr. Soc

New-York, November 20, 1837.

Every attempt to ascertain the Principles which ought to govern the interpretation of the Prophetic Writings, merits encouragement. On this account the subscriber hopes that the work of the Rev. Mr. Jones on the subject, may be published and extensively circulated.

ALONZO POTTER,

Professor of Moral Philosophy Union College,

[Clergyman of the Episcopal Church.]

Schenectady, September 6, 1837.

I hereby certify, that having read the *Principles, Illustrations and Proofs* of the following work, as far as enabled from once reading them, I am prepared to give them my unqualified approval as being just, reasonable and scriptural.

ELISHA WHEELER,

Pastor of the M. E. Church.

Lowville, October 2, 1837.

Having once hastily perused the following work of Mr. Jones, I am prepared to say, that whether every part of it will bear the test of rigid scrutiny or not, he has bestowed unwearied labor on the important subject of which it treats, and exhibited no small degree of ingenuity. I think it worthy of the attention of such persons as study and labor after a full and perfect understanding of the Sacred Scriptures.

ISAAC CLINTON, Presbyterian Minister.

Lowville, October 17, 1837.

I have been favored with an opportunity of forming an opinion of the *Principles of Interpretation*, as contained in a manuscript of Mr. Jones; and so far as I have been enabled to decide in relation to the merits of it from a discourse on the same subject delivered to the people of my charge on the Sabbath, and a single reading during his stay with me, I feel at liberty to give my approbation of the work, and believe it to be well calculated to aid in the reading and understanding of the Holy Scriptures.

PAUL WEIDMAN,

Pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church at
Manheim, Herkimer county.

N. B. Forty or more other clergymen of different denominations in country towns, have given written recommendations of the above work, so far as to encourage its being published and examined by the Christian community, while a far greater number have done the same orally.

INTRODUCTION.

THE object of the following work is not to discuss in general, the Principles of Biblical Interpretation; but rather to present briefly and simply some important and leading facts, as, "*First Principles of the Oracles of God*," with special reference to the study of the HOLY PROPHECIES; and in some degree to assist in the more full examination of the Scriptures. These "*First Principles*," it is believed, have heretofore been, and are still too much overlooked in the study of the Prophecies, while in the improper use of much human learning, the mind has probably been led to soar above the benevolent condescension of the Almighty in his making the way of life so plain that babes in Christ shall understand it, and "wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

It is a fact too painfully known to admit dispute, that for some cause, the Prophetical Writings of both the Old and New Testaments, are at present comparatively but little read and less understood; while their quickness and power, as means of grace, are but little experienced by a vast proportion even of hopeful Christians. Since it is, therefore, thus apparent, that the Prophecies have so far lost their original converting and sanctifying power, it must be considered altogether suitable for the friends of God and the Bible, to inquire into, and, if possible, search out the true cause why these things are so, and to devise some effectual remedy against the evil.

From a diligent and somewhat protracted research into these matters, it has appeared that the leading cause of the present inefficacy of the Prophecies, as intended means of grace, is the want of their being better understood, appearing,

as they have done too generally, so much like a dead letter, or as "the words of a book that is sealed;" or, what is much worse than this, their sometimes having a meaning attached to them which is contrary to the spirit of the gospel, and thus directly calculated to destroy their spirituality and power in the work of the Lord. This evil, it is believed, has come upon us as the work of the false prophet in his *sowing tares among the good seed*; or falsehood among the truths of God's word, *while men have slept*. For centuries past, it must be acknowledged, that there has been a gradual, and at the same time imperceptible falling away in Zion. Under these circumstances, in the want of due watchfulness and care, it is believed that our fathers in Israel, for ages past, who have instructed us most on the Prophecies, have admitted in their works, certain principles of interpreting those writings, which are in their spirit at variance with the spirit of the gospel, or "First Principles of the Oracles of God." The incautious admission of such principles in their study of the Prophecies, would naturally furnish interpretations equally erroneous for their posterity in the same declining state of the Church. Such interpretations, it will be allowed, would rather destroy than sustain the Prophecies as means of grace, in converting the ungodly, or furnishing the spiritual mind with its natural and necessary food.

It must be admitted by all who make the Bible their study, that the preaching of God himself, contained in the prophetic, as well as other parts of his Holy Word, was designed to be, and remain to the end of time, as a work in all respects perfect, like its Author, and most naturally calculated, when rightly wielded, to operate as a more powerful means of grace than any thing besides ever preached or written. Consequently, those interpretations of the Prophecies which would naturally make them powerless, or ineffectual as means of grace, are to be regarded as suspicious, from whatever source they may have come; while others which allow them their original force and efficacy as the sword of the Spirit in converting the soul, are to be received, however unpopular or repulsive they may be to the carnal mind.

Since the present supposed false principles of interpreting the Prophecies to their injury, have neither been written nor openly known, as by any distinct names, or forms of expression, but rather suffered to hold a quiet place in the mind, as the hidden and unsuspected suggestions of darkness, the best manner now in attempting to repel them, will not be directly and violently to assail them, as heresies, really maintained by any, but rather, if possible, to lay down, establish and illustrate, some principles of truth in connexion with the subject, by which, indirectly to sweep them away. These principles must be simple, reasonable, scriptural, and easy to be understood and applied, even by the unlearned, who in the spirit shall diligently search the Prophecies to find out their true and full meaning. Such principles, surely, can always be safely trusted; and if such, indeed, shall now be presented, the interpretations to which they shall naturally lead, in studying the Prophecies, must, of course, and of necessity, be admitted, whether harmonizing or conflicting with our own, or others' former opinions on the same Prophecies.

Should there appear various repetitions of the same Principle in the different illustrations of this work, it may be considered that there is such an affinity between them all, that their being divided into twenty-four parts, is rather as a matter of convenience in the investigation, than to denote a positive distinction among them; so that in many instances the arguments and illustrations under one head, would be equally appropriate under another. As in the Bible, so it needs be under present circumstances of Principles in its interpretation; we must have "*precept upon precept, precept upon precept,*" &c., which, with the Almighty, is far from resembling the vain repetitions of the heathen and the hypocrite in their prayers.

With regard to the general correctness of these Principles and their illustrations, the spiritually-minded and others are left to form their own opinions, on carefully examining and trying them, by the excellent rules of a holy life, the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Scriptures, which are to be severally recommended. After much humiliation, prayer, and patient labor to throw them into the best shape, whether they shall prove

useful or not, the work is now affectionately submitted to the christian public; and especially to those of every name and order among the dear children of God, who mean to act on the gospel principle of seeking to be great in heaven, by first becoming small on the earth. From critics of this character, who are fixed on having the *whole* truth, and nothing but the truth, in their study of the Prophecies, the author, with all his imperfections, has nothing to fear, and would only ask of others who may read the work, that they would do it candidly and fairly, without misconstruction, and by all means to try the *Proofs* by the unerring standard of truth, rather than the positions merely by their own, or other men's preconceived opinions on the subject.

New-York, November, 1837.

H. J.

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FIRST PRINCIPLES

ILLUSTRATED.

PRINCIPLE I.

THE words *Jacob—Israel—Judah—Joseph—Joshua—Jerusalem—House of the Lord—Temple of the Lord, &c.*, in the Prophets, are usually given to represent the flock of God on earth ; sometimes including both the saints and sinners of his vineyard ; sometimes limited to the one class, and sometimes to the other ; while some of them occasionally signify the church in glory. Some other words in the Prophets, such as *David, Solomon*, and *Zerubbabel*, may be understood as representing Christ, the church, or both ; all of which must be determined by a careful examination of the connexion.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

1. JACOB. "Let them know that God ruleth in *Jacob*."* "To them that turn from transgression in *Jacob*."† "It is even the time of *Jacob's* trouble, but he shall be saved out of it."‡ In the first two of these passages, the word *Jacob* must represent both saints and sinners in the flock or vineyard of the Lord; otherwise there would seem to be no sense in the connexion. In the latter passage, it is apparent from its promise of salvation, that saints only are represented by the word *Jacob*.||

2. ISRAEL. (1.) "He that keepeth *Israel* shall neither slumber nor sleep."§ (2.) "Turn ye, turn ye,—for why will ye die, O house of *Israel*?"¶ (3.) "For they are not all *Israel*, which are of *Israel*."** The promise in the first of these passages, shows the word *Israel*, to signify saints especially; while the threatening admonition of the second shows the same word as representing rather the wicked of the flock; and the distinction of characters in *Israel*, shown in the third passage, exhibits the word as representing the two classes of God's flock, either separate, or together.††

3. JUDAH. (1.) "*Judah* shall be saved."‡‡ (2.) "Hear the word of the Lord, ye remnant of *Judah*."||| (3.) "The sin of *Judah* is written with a pen of iron."§§ In the first of these passages, the promise shows that *Judah* represents saints only; in the second, the idea of a "remnant" in *Judah*, shows the word to include both classes of the flock; while in the third, the mention of the exceeding depth of

* Ps. 59 : 13. † Isa. 59 : 20. ‡ Jer. 30 : 7. || See Ps. 14 : 7. 22 : 23. 85 : 1. 135 : 4. Isa. 10 : 21. Amos 7 : 2. § Ps. 121 : 4. ¶ Ezek. 33 : 11. ** Rom. 9 : 6. †† See Ps. 25 : 22. 81 : 11. Isa. 49 : 5. Acts 28 : 20. Gal. 6 : 16. ‡‡ Jer. 23 : 6. ||| Jer. 42 : 15. §§ Jer. 17 : 1.

Judah's sin, exhibits the same word as having special reference to the ungodly of the flock.*

4. JOSEPH. (1.) "Give ear, thou that ledest *Joseph* like a flock."† (2.) "The Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of *Joseph*."‡ "But they are not grieved for the affliction of *Joseph*."|| In the first of these passages, it is conspicuous, that *Joseph* signifies the flock of Israel, as sustained and led by the Almighty;—in the second, the remnant of *Joseph*, to whom the Lord will be gracious, shows that *Joseph* as a body, includes both the good and the bad of the flock; while in the third, the affliction of *Joseph*, entitling him to the sympathy and grief of others, shows the word as having special reference to the saints of the flock.§

5. JOSHUA. (1.) "And he showed me *Joshua*, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. Now, *Joshua* was clothed in filthy garments, and stood before the angel."¶ (2.) "Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them on the head of *Joshua*."**

Proof that *Joshua*, in these passages, signifies the whole body of saints on earth: (1.) His being clothed with filthy garments, is a striking emblem of the saints' present uncleanness of raiment, in comparison of their clean, fine, and white attire reserved for them in heaven.†† (2.) Satan's standing at his right hand to resist him, is the very thing which the whole body of saints on earth, are always called to encounter, as represented in their spiritual warfare, both in the Old and New Testaments.‡‡ (3.) The golden crowns here promised to *Joshua*, as the gracious reward of his obedience, must be understood as the same which are

* See Ps. 114: 2. Jer. 14: 2. Ezek. 27: 17. † Ps. 80: 1. ‡ Amos 5: 15. || Amos 6: 6. § See Ps. 81: 5. Ezek. 37: 16. 48: 32. ¶ Zech. 3: 1--3. ** Zech. 6: 11. †† Luke 15: 22, &c. Rev. 19: 8, 14, 21: 2. ‡‡ Ps. 118: 10--12. 144: 1. Eph. 6: 12--19, &c.

elsewhere promised to all the faithful and overcoming saints.* (4.) The taking away of *Joshua's* filthy garments with his "iniquity," to clothe him "with change of raiment," and "a fair mitre upon" his "head," as promised in the connexion, is understood to be parallel with the multiplied precious promises of God to all his saints, throughout the Bible. (5.) Without so understanding the passage, so long after the days of a literal *Joshua*, it must seem impossible to give it any scriptural or rational construction.

6. JERUSALEM. (1.) "Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not *Jerusalem* to my chief joy."† (2.) "Speak ye comfortably to *Jerusalem*, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned."‡ (3.) "I will make *Jerusalem* heaps and a den of dragons."|| (4.) "*Jerusalem* which now is—is in bondage with her children."§ (5.) "But *Jerusalem* which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all."¶ In the first of these passages, the word *Jerusalem* seems naturally to include the cause, people, and upper city of God, most lovely to saints; in the second, the fulness of the promise shows the word *Jerusalem* to represent saints only—the terrible threatening in the third, denotes its representing rather the ungodly—while the same word in the fourth, appears to represent Zion in her present suffering condition, oppressed by sin and the god of this world;—and in the fifth, the heavenly city, or New Jerusalem above, as truly the mother of all the faithful in Christ.**

7. HOUSE OF THE LORD. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."†† "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God."‡‡ "In my Father's house are many mansions."||| "We have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the

* Rev. 4: 4. 3: 21. † Ps. 137: 6. ‡ Isa. 40: 2. || Jer. 9: 11. § Gal. 4: 25. ¶ Gal. 4: 26. ** Rev. 21: 2. †† Ps. 23: 6. ‡‡ Ps. 92: 13. ||| John 14: 2.

heavens.”* “But Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”† In these, and hundreds of other passages, especially in the Prophets, the word house, or house of the Lord, seems clearly to represent the flock or household of God on earth, or in heaven, rather than any building made with hands.

8. TEMPLE OF THE LORD. “I saw the Lord on a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.”‡ “The Lord shall suddenly come to his temple.”|| “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God,—for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”§ “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.”¶ “Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.”** It being expressly said, that God “dwelleth not in temples made with hands,†† it appears, that we are to understand these and other parallel expressions of “the temple of God,” as signifying his people, rather than any building composed of mere earthly materials.

9. DAVID. (1.) “For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of *David*.”‡‡ (2.) “And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of *David*.”||| (3.) “Then there shall enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of *David*,—and this city shall remain forever.”§§ (4.) “*David* shall never want a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel.”¶¶ (5.) “These things, saith he that is true, he that is holy, he that hath the key of *David*, he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth.”^a In these and seve-

* 2 Cor. 5: 1. † Heb. 3: 6. ‡ Isa. 6: 1. || Mal. 3: 1. § 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17. ¶ 2 Cor. 6: 16. ** Rev. 3: 12. †† Acts 7: 48. 17: 24. ‡‡ Ps. 122: 5. ||| Isa. 55: 3. §§ Jer. 17: 25. ¶¶ Jer. 33: 17. ^a Rev. 3: 7.

ral other passages of the Prophets, the word *David* must appear to represent Christ, the church, or both, as the case may be; since the key and power of *David* here mentioned, can be no less than the power of Christ,—the house and city of *David*, to “remain forever,” no less than the house of Christ,—the throne of *David*, no less than the throne of Christ,—and the thrones of the house of *David*, no less than the thrones promised by Christ, to all his overcoming followers, as kings and priests with him in his glorious upper kingdom.*

10. SOLOMON. (1.) The song of songs, which is Solomon’s.”† (2.) Behold his bed, which is Solomon’s, three score valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.” (3.) “King *Solomon* made himself a chariot—of silver—of gold—of purple—paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.”‡ *Solomon*, in these passages, and in this whole song, must be understood as representing Christ, and the blessedness he has prepared for all the daughters of Jerusalem, or departments of his church; as the spouse of the song represents the church of his saints, their love to him, and longing to be with him in glory; otherwise the song would be apparently senseless or unscriptural. In various other places, *Solomon* seems to be a type of Christ, though on some occasions rather the reverse.||

11. ZERUBBABEL. (1.) “This is the word of the Lord unto *Zerubbabel*: not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” “Who art thou, O great mountain? before *Zerubbabel* thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shouting, crying grace, grace unto it.” “The hands of *Zerubbabel* have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it.”§ It is apparent, that *Zerubbabel*, in this passage, is a

* Dan. 7: 22. Mat. 19: 28. 1 Cor. 6: 2, Rev. 5: 10. 20: 4—6. † Cant. 1: 1. ‡ Cant. 3: 7—11. || See 1 Kings 6: 14. 10: 24. § Zech. 4: 6, 7, 9.

type of Christ, or of Christ and his church, from the facts stated of his doing his work only by the Spirit of the Lord, as a spiritual work ; his finally making a plain of the great mountain of Satanic power arrayed against his cause—his laying the foundation and finishing the true house of God, and bringing forth the headstone thereof with shouting, &c., all representing the finally accomplished work of Christ with the everlasting triumph and rejoicing of all the elect, in their house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,* as it is predicted of Christ and his people, that they shall “thresh the *mountains*.”† Should we attempt otherwise to understand this prophecy concerning *Zerubbabel*, it must seem difficult to make it harmonize with other scriptures, or the great end for which the scriptures were given, or even to make any sense of the passages.‡

* 2 Cor. 5: 1. † Isa. 41: 15. ‡ See also passages apparently parallel in Hag. and Ezra.

PRINCIPLE II.

THE word *Babylon*, in the Prophets of both the Old and New Testaments, is used to signify the whole kingdom of Antichrist, of wicked men and devils, instead of the papal power, or an ancient literal city merely,—while the words, *Sodom*, *Egypt*, *Assyria*, *Philistia*, *Moab*, *Edom*, the *Heathen*, and other kindred words in the same writings, signify the same great kingdom of Satan, or component parts of it finally to be destroyed.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

1. **BABYLON.** It is not strange that our fathers, having the clearest view of the papal power as it was at the commencement of the reformation, considered the New Testament *Babylon* as a type of popery merely, when it is recollected how completely it had then swallowed up the church,—was setting itself up above all that was called God,—was doing the work of the beast in its bloody persecution of the saints, and grasping hard after universal earthly dominion. But we live in later days, and see popery under different circumstances; though with no less apparent effort for universal power, while the conjecture of many seems rational, and even probable, that the time is not very distant, when it will so exalt itself as the “Mother of Harlots,” or

Beast of wickedness, as to combine together all the other powers of wickedness, both earthly and infernal, to wonder, and go after the Beast, who, together, will then constitute the "great Babylon" finally to come in "remembrance before God," &c.*

I. PROOF *that the BABYLON of the Rev. represents the whole of Satan's kingdom, rather than the present powers of Popery merely.*

1. Popery has not yet corrupted *all* nations, kings, and merchants of the earth, with its pride and wickedness, as is said of the *Babylon* of the Revelation.†

2. God being no respecter of persons, would not naturally threaten a destruction against papal sinners, which is not equally designed against others, as we find in all the threatenings against Babylon.

3. To suppose *Babylon* limited to Popery, would involve the absurd position, that greater wrath is reserved for a part, than the whole of Satan's kingdom.

4. The figures showing the final destruction of *Babylon* in the 17th, 18th, and 19th chapters of Revelation, seem as perfectly appropriate to the final fall of Satan's kingdom, as any which could be chosen for the purpose.

5. To interpret all these threatenings against *Babylon*, as designed only for papal sinners, would naturally quiet protestant sinners and hypocrites in their sins, till finally too late to escape them.

II. PROOF *that the BABYLON of the Old Testament Prophets, is a type of the whole of Satan's kingdom, instead of a temporal city merely, and long ago destroyed, as some have supposed.*

1. It would be contrary to the great, holy, and spiritual end for which the prophecies were given, for the Almighty to fill them with things so carnal as the mere political rise and fall of a literal *Babylon*, or other benighted nations of the earth.

* Rev. 16: 19. † Rev. 17: 2. 18: 3, 9, 11, 17, 24.

2. The figures showing the destruction of *Babylon*, in the Old Testament, are such as to render them utterly incapable of meaning any thing less than the final destruction of all the enemies of God without distinction. The following is a fair specimen: "The burden of *Babylon*—the kingdoms of nations gathered together, the Lord of hosts mustereth the hosts of the battle—they come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, with the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land. Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel, both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate, and he shall destroy the sinners thereof, out of it.*

3. Our present popular histories of an ancient literal *Babylon*, are too extravagantly fabulous and contradictory among themselves, to be admitted as trusty witnesses, or interpreters of the preceding and other parallel passages concerning the *Babylon* of prophecy. See sketches of such history, under Principle 22d of this work.

4. Parallel passages from the Revelation and ancient Prophets, compared, will show with clearness, that the *Babylon* of each, is identically the same, and no less than the whole powers of darkness combined.

* Isa. 13: 1—11.

COMPARISONS.

1. Rev. 18: 2, "*Babylon* the great is fallen, is fallen," &c.

2. Rev. 18: 7, "How much she [*Babylon*] hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously—for she saith in her heart, *I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.*"

1. Isa. 21: 9, "*Babylon is fallen, is fallen.*"

Jer. 51: 8, "*Babylon is suddenly fallen, and destroyed.*"

2. Isa. 47: 7, 8, "And thou [*Babylon*] saidst, I shall be a lady forever—thou that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else besides me, *I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I see the loss of children.*"

3. Rev. 18: 4, "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, *come out of her, my people.*"

3. Isa. 48: 20, "*Go ye forth of Babylon; flee ye from the Chaldeans.*"

Isa. 52: 11, "*Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence.*"

Jer. 50: 8, "*Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go ye forth out of the land of the Chaldeans.*"

Jer. 51: 6, 45, "*Flee out of the midst of Babylon.—My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul.*"

4. Rev. 17: 4, "And the woman was arrayed in purple—having a *golden cup* in her hand, full of abominations, and filthiness of her fornications."

4. Jer. 51: 7, "*Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken; the nations have drunken of her wine, therefore the nations are mad.*"

5. Rev. 17: 1, 15, 18, "I will shew thee the judgment of the great whore [*Babylon*] that *sitteth upon many waters.*" "The waters which thou sawest where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." "And the woman—is that great city."

5. Jer. 51: 13, "O thou [*Babylon*] that *dwellest upon many waters*, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness."

In further proof of this point, it may be useful to compare the whole of the 17th, 18th, and 19th chapters of Revelation, with the 48th and 52d chapters of Isaiah, together with the 51st and 52d of Jeremiah, and such other passages of the Old Testament Prophets, as may be found by faithful references, or otherwise, to be parallel concerning *Babylon*.

2. SODOM AND EGYPT, *typical of Satan's kingdom.*

(1.) "And their dead bodies [slain witnesses] shall lie in the street of that great city, which spiritually is called *Sodom*

and *Egypt*, where also our Lord was crucified.”* (2.) “Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of *Sodom*; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of *Gomorrhah*.”† (3.) “They [Israel’s prophets] are all of them unto me as *Sodom*, and the inhabitants thereof as *Gomorrhah*.”‡ (4.) “*Egypt* is like a fair heifer, but destruction cometh.”§ (5.) “Wo to them that go down into *Egypt* for help!”¶ It must seem difficult to find any rational and scriptural construction of these and other parallel words, unless we understand them as being typical at least, of various component parts of the kingdom of Antichrist; since it is expressly said in the first one quoted, that “the great city” is “spiritually,” (or figuratively,) “called *Sodom and Egypt*,” while many others appear to use the words in the same manner.

3. ASSYRIA, typical of the same Antichrist.

“And it shall come to pass, in that day, [latter day,] that the Lord shall set his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left, from *Assyria*.” “And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people which shall be left from *Assyria*.”¶ The natural sense and connexion of these passages, must, it is believed, show them, as divine promises made unto the elect, “remnant” or true saints of the house of Israel, to be fulfilled, in their final gathering from all the countries of this wicked world, appropriately prefigured by such places as *Assyria*, and others noted in the Bible as the habitation of those who have specially oppressed the people of God on earth. Otherwise, the passages are shrouded in gross darkness.

4. PHILISTIA, MOAB, AND EDM, typical of the same.

“*Moab* is my wash pot, over *Edom* will I cast out my

* Rev. 11: 8. † Isa. 1: 10. ‡ Jer. 23: 14. § Jer. 46: 20. ¶ Isa. 31: 1. See Isa. 1: 9. Ezek. 20: 7. 30: 9, 14. 32: 12. Ezek. 16: 46, and others. ¶ Isa. 11: 11, 16.

shoe; over *Philistia* will I triumph.”* In understanding this, as a prediction of the final triumph of Zion with Christ, over all her enemies, it perfectly harmonizes with the whole tenor of the Bible, with common sense, and acknowledged principles of interpretation, showing the names of those places as striking types of the various departments of Satan’s kingdom to be degraded and cast down by Christ and his saints, when soon they shall come to reign.† A contrary interpretation, it is thought, must set at nought “the first principles” of the Bible. These words in various other prophecies, appear to be used for the same purpose.‡

5. THE HEATHEN, *also, God’s enemies generally.*

- (1.) “Thou—hast scattered us among the *heathen*.”||
- (2.) “But were mingled among the *heathen*.” (3.) “Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the *heathen*.”§
- (4.) “The *heathen* entered into her sanctuary, whom thou didst command that they should not enter into thy congregation.”¶
- (5.) “Pour out thy fury upon the *heathen* that know thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy name.”**

PROOF: *That the heathen, in these passages, are the ungodly generally.*

1. The saints on earth have always been and always will be “scattered among the” wicked who have access to the word of God, rather than those who never heard of it, as mentioned in the first and second passage, among “the heathen.”

2. As in the third passage, the saints are all to be saved and gathered from among all nations, kindreds, peoples and

* Ps. 108: 9. † See 1 Cor. 15: 25. Ps. 149: 5—9. Mal. 4: 3. Rev. 2: 26, 27. 3: 21. ‡ Ps. 87: 4. 83: 6. Isa. 15: 1. 63: 1. Ezek. 25: 12, 14. || Ps. 44: 11, 14. § Ps. 106: 35, 47. ¶ Lam. 1: 10. ** Jer. 10: 25. Ps. 79: 6.

tongues of the wicked, where the gospel shall have gone, rather than among others totally without its witness.*

3. As mentioned in the fourth, the ungodly under gospel light, enter into the earthly sanctuary, rather than others in gross darkness, and situated beyond the favored lands of the sanctuary.

4. According to the fifth passage, God will pour out his fury more signally on the ungodly and prayerless, perishing under the light of the gospel, than upon others to whom the Bible has not been carried.†

5. To understand the word *heathen*, in the Prophets, as representing those only who never heard of the gospel, violates the various first principles of the word of God, comforting gospel sinners in their sins, and otherwise injuring the Bible in its converting and sanctifying power.

6. It seems altogether contrary to the character and strict impartiality of God, that he should occupy so large a part of his word with admonitions and threatenings designed for the condition only of those who are wholly beyond the hearing of such things.

* Mat. 24: 14. Rev. 14: 6. Rev. 7: 9. Ezek. 11: 16, 17.

† Luke 12: 47, 48. John 15: 22. Acts 17: 30.

PRINCIPLE III.

THE divine promises throughout the Bible, presented as the reward of the faithful, are the portion of none but the saints, and to be inherited by them all without distinction, in the world of glory forever.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

I. PROOF: *That a literal Canaan for Abraham's seed was not the real inheritance in the promise to the faithful.*

1. Achan entered into it, though most destitute of any faith by which to be entitled to the promise.*

2. Moses fell short of it, though exercising the greatest faith to embrace the promise, going more immediately as he did, to a better land of promise.†

3. None of those who entered there, ever had the land as an *inheritance*, according to the promise; none tarrying but for a moment, as it were, and all their posterity long ago, driven out of it.‡

4. The Jews did not " *dwell safely*" in that literal Canaan, according to the promise, "And ye shall dwell in the land in safety."§ "Ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely."§

5. While in that land, they found no *true* rest, according

* Josh. 7: 18—25. † Deut. 34: 4—12. ‡ Gen. 15: 7. 28: 4. § Lev. 25: 18. § Lev. 26: 5. See Ezek. 34: 28.

to promise,* being so continually in conflict with enemies, both visible and invisible.

6. Paul, by the Spirit of God, said, "If Jesus [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day. There remaineth, therefore, a rest unto the people of God."† This inspired argument alone, surely, is sufficient to settle the question, that a literal Canaan by Joshua, was nothing more than a type of all the saints' everlasting rest, since such a rest was frequently promised the faithful, after the crossing of Jordan.‡

II. PROOF : *That the promises are heavenly, rather than for the literal return of the Jews, including the ten supposed lost tribes.*

1. There does not appear, from inspiration, any clear testimony that the ten revolting tribes were ever lost as a distinct people yet to be found; while it does rather seem clear, by the history of the 17th chapter of 2 Kings, that in their revolt and rebellion against God, and entire renunciation of Jewish privileges, they became amalgamated with the Assyrians, God's enemies. This view of the subject is further confirmed by the fact, that their descendants of Samaria, where they thus mingled, were looking out for the Messiah, and more ready to receive him at his advent than the more self-righteous Jews, who would not deal with the Samaritans. This must be admitted, on considering the circumstances of Christ's stopping at Samaria, finding the woman at the well, and her friends so hearty and ready to believe in him, and his pronouncing such *fields already white for the harvest.*||

2. To suppose those precious promises as designed specially for Jews, would show the Almighty as making a distinction between Jews and Greeks, which is positively denied by an inspired apostle.§

* Ex. 33: 14. Deut. 3: 20. † Heb. 4: 8, 9. ‡ Isa. 14: 3. Jer. 6: 16. 36: 10. Mi. 2: 10. Mat. 11: 28, 29. || John 4: 4—40. § Rom. 10: 12. Gal. 3: 28.

3. Such promises, if made to unbelieving Jews, as such, would be at variance with the imperious duty of the prophets, to say, "Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him,"* since this would be making comforting promises to wicked Jews.

4. Such a literal return of Jews by the divine promise, is contrary to the economy of God, in labors to bring them to Christ, since experience has generally proved, that such indulgences of the flesh, do more naturally entice men to love the world and hold it fast, than immediately to renounce all for Christ's sake and the gospel's.

5. The supposed various promises in the Prophets for the literal return of the scattered Jews to Palestine, will be found on examination, by the connexion of those passages, to be rather the great promises of God to all his scattered "elect,"† or true Israel by faith, finally to be "gathered" into their "own land,"‡ or "a better country which is an heavenly,"§ for which Abraham "looked,"§ since all that are Christ's are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."¶

6. The extraordinary city very particularly described in the last nine chapters of Ezekiel, supposed, by some, to be a literal city and temple, yet to be built, and thought to be perhaps the strongest proof of the approaching literal return of that people, appears, on a critical examination, to be rather a most striking figure of the heavenly city and temple, yet to be completed, as a house not made with hands for the return and everlasting possession of the true people of God, wherever previously scattered in the world. The most palpable proof of this position consists in the simple fact, that many of the leading particulars contained in Ezekiel's description of this city, are perfectly parallel to the same particulars in the description of the same city by John the Revelator, as shown him in vision, while it is supposed that the

* Isa. 3: 11. † Mat. 24: 31. ‡ Ezek 34: 13. 36: 24. § Heb. 11: 16. § Heb. 11: 10. ¶ Gal. 3: 29, 7.

saints are agreed that the city of the Revelation, called *New Jerusalem*,* is indeed the heavenly city. That the reader may see the conclusiveness of this argument more readily, let him at once compare the following parallel passages in the two descriptions of this city.

COMPARISONS.

1st. Rev. 21: 10, with Ezek. 40: 2, both mentioning "a great and high mountain"—or, "a very high mountain," the place of the city's being seen.

2d. Rev. 21: 15, with Ezek. 40: 5—in relation to a measuring reed, and the careful measurement of every part of the city, supposed to represent the faithful examination and fitness of every thing constituting a part of the beloved city.

3d. Rev. 21: 12, with Ezek. 48: 31—34—in relation to the city's having twelve gates, and all named severally, by the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, as the same tribes are elsewhere made a figure of the 144,000, multitude, &c., of those to be finally sealed and gathered into the same city.†

4th. Rev. 21: 1, with Ezek. 47: 1, &c. in relation to the pure waters of the river of life, in the midst of the city, where all the saints shall drink, and drink the waters that Christ shall give them, and thirst no more.‡

5th. Rev. 22: 2, with Ezek. 47: 12, in relation to the tree of life growing by the river, bearing twelve manner of fruits, and yielding her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations, showing the perpetuity of the saints' rest, the fulness of their being fed with heavenly fruits, and their perfect and continual health of soul to enjoy

* Rev. 21: 2. † Rev. 7: 4—9. ‡ John 4: 14. 6: 35.

the food, where all those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, shall be forever filled.*

6th. Rev. 21: 3. 22: 3, with Ezek. 48: 35, in relation to the name of the city, from the time of its finishing,—“The Lord is there”—“The tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them”—“The throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it.”

III. PROOF: *That the saints' promises are all glorious and eternal when enjoyed, instead of being partly fulfilled in the common comforts, or good things merely of this world.*

1. The present life is only a season of probation, and not of divine rewards given before the saints' full trial and acquittal, as promised only at their final overcoming.†

2. Christ is to bring his reward with him, at his coming, “to give unto every one according to his works,” instead of sending it partly to them, while they are in the flesh and still on trial.‡

3. The promise of carnal, or mere earthly enjoyments, would naturally make the mind carnal, which “is death,” and would not, of course, be made by the Almighty.||

4. Promises for spiritual and everlasting possessions naturally tend to make the mind spiritual, which “is life and peace,” and are just such as God could consistently make to all the faithful.§

5. God makes no distinction between saints and sinners, in giving them their mere animal comforts, making “his sun to rise on the evil and on the good,” and sending “rain on the just and on the unjust.”

6. Earthly possessions cannot belong to the saints' promised reward, since the wicked, like the rich man, without faith to receive the promise, usually have the most of them,

* Mat. 5: 6 † Mat 24: 13. Rev. 2: 7, 11, 17, 26. ‡ Rev. 22: 12. Isa. 40: 10. || Rom. 8: 6. § Matt. 5: 45. See Eccl. 9: 2.

while the most faithful, like Lazarus, are assured of the greatest earthly privation and suffering.*

7. Such earthly possessions, if promised and obtained, could not satisfy the souls of the most faithful, who like the Psalmist cannot be satisfied till awaking in the divine likeness,† and would like Paul, desire rather “to depart and be with Christ, which is far better” than any thing earthly.‡

8. Saints could not, if they would, take hold by faith on any promise of earthly possessions, because of their frequent admonitions from God, against boasting of to-morrow, and taking thought for the morrow, not knowing what a day may bring forth.¶

9. The sudden requirement of the soul is presented as a warning from the Almighty against an anticipation of earthly goods laid up for days yet to come, as in these words, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.§

10. God could not consistently promise his people any thing to lay up as an earthly treasure, while positively forbidding, as he does, their laying it up.¶

11. The promise could not be partly for making men rich on earth, since its being really fulfilled would make it harder for them “to enter into the kingdom of God” than for “a camel to go through the eye of a needle.”**

12. Abraham considered the divine promise to him as given for a heavenly possession only, since Paul represents him as having “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God”††—while the martyr Stephen affirms that God never gave Abraham of an earthly land, “so much as to set his foot on.”‡‡

13. Paul, who knew by the Spirit of God, considered all the divine promises to the faithful, as designed for future and eternal treasures only, which led him to say of the innume-

* Luke 16: 19—21. Ps. 73: 3—7. John 16: 33. † Ps. 17: 15.
‡ Phil. 1: 23. ¶ Prov. 27: 1. Mat. 6: 34. James 4: 14. § Luke 12: 20. ¶ Mat. 6: 19. **Mat. 19: 24. ††Heb. 11: 10. ‡‡Acts 7: 5.

nable multitude of the departed saints—"These all died in the faith, not having received the promises;" and again—"These all having obtained a good report, through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us,"* i. e. better than the mere trash of this world which perishes with the using.

14. The land, or blessings promised the faithful, is expressly and repeatedly represented by the Almighty as being theirs "*forever*," &c. on their receiving the promise, as follows—"And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, the land whereon thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an *everlasting* possession; and I will be their God."† "The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever."‡ "Thy people also, shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever."|| "And they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob, my servant—and their children, and their children's children forever—and my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forever more."§ Surely, here is eternal life, and eternal life only promised to all the saints, or it must be granted that God never promised any thing to the saints before Christ, as the reward of their faith, better than mere worldly things, or idols, as might be said; because if these promises, so frequently declared by the Almighty to be for an *everlasting* portion, are not *truly* for such an eternal portion, it will be in vain to search the Old Testament any farther to find a promise to the saints of eternal life.

15. Satan promised earthly rewards, or possessions, to our first parents, and even to Christ himself, as enticements to sin, and has ever since continued the same course with mankind generally, as one of his most successful modes of destruction; the Lord, then, in his opposite labors to save men,

* Heb. 11: 13, 39, 40. † Gen. 17: 8. 48: 4. ‡ Ps. 37: 29. § Isa. 60: 21. ¶ Ezek. 37: 25—28.

would not naturally imitate Satan in such a promise to a single individual.*

16. It is perfectly characteristic of the Almighty, who is all spiritual, all holy, all wise, omnipotent and eternal, when persuading immortal souls, made by himself to aspire after infinite and eternal good, entering immediately into the world of spirits, that he should think of no other than promises of infinite and everlasting rewards to all the faithful and overcoming of his people.

IV. PROOF—COUNTER ARGUMENTS.

1. "I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."† To understand this, as a divine assurance that the saints shall be more abundantly or constantly supplied with temporal bread, or this world's goods, than others, is contrary to the sentiment of the Psalmist, that the *wicked* "have more than heart could wish," of such things, while the righteous usually are the most afflicted.‡ It is contrary, also, to the lessons taught the church, by their continued observation and experience in these things. And should the saints consider such things as promises of special earthly enjoyments, how frequently must they be seen as broken, or unfulfilled promises; in cases more or less like that of the beggar Lazarus; while "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness."|| But should we understand this promise of bread to the righteous and their seed, as given to be redeemed with that bread and that meat, which endureth unto everlasting life, for which the saints are required exclusively to labor; the promise will always be fulfilled, as the Lord will evermore give them this bread, and never forsake them.§

2. "And shall he not much more feed you, O ye of little

* Gen. 3: 1—5. Mat. 4: 8, 9. † Ps. 37: 25. ‡ Ps. 73: 7. 34: 19. || 2 Pet. 3: 9. Heb. 6: 17, 18. § John 6: 27. Heb. 13: 5.

faith?"* This, indeed, is an *assurance* that the Lord will do all which he knows infinitely well, will be best for the saints' clothing and other temporal sustenance; but is, after all, no more than the wicked and the fowls enjoy without the promise, and therefore cannot be the real promised reward of faith.†

3. "But godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."‡ Instead of understanding this as including a real promise to the saints for the great present sensual enjoyments, of which they generally receive less than the wicked, without their being entitled to the *promise* of *godliness*; why may we not understand, by "the promise of the life that now is," that it is a promise of the *heavenly* life, which now is—is now enjoyed by the saints in glory—is now waiting for all others to whom it is promised; while a foretaste or spirit of preparation for it, now dwells with the saints, as eternal life is sometimes spoken of as abiding in them even while in the flesh?|| These considerations, together with the fact that sensual enjoyments are not even mentioned in the above passage, may show that the divine promises are, all of them, infinitely better, and more to be desired, than if a part of their excellency, when enjoyed, must be expended in the sordid indulgences of animal appetite. As a farther supposed

OBJECTION to the ground now assumed, in regard to the infinitude and eternity of all the divine promises, it is sometimes said, that there are many *religious*, or *spiritual* blessings promised the saints, in the present life, which they actually enjoy, just in proportion to their fidelity, and which they need as necessary incitements to a holy life; and that the spirit of the Lord is specially promised to those who ask.§ It is true, and a cause for everlasting thanksgiving to God, that great encouragements are given the saints in their

* Mat. 6: 30. † Mat. 5: 45. 6: 26. ‡ 1 Tim. 4: 8. || 1 John 3: 15.
§ John 14: 14—17.

earthly pilgrimage—that “in keeping” his commandments, “there is great reward”^{*}—and that “Great peace have they which love his law, and nothing shall offend them.”[†] Still, it is apprehended, from the fact that the Spirit also does much with the word of God, in operating upon the minds of the unbelieving, and from other facts already considered, that the passages just mentioned and their parallels, are to be understood for the benefit of those of the weakest faith, as *assurances* that nothing shall be withheld either from their souls or bodies, known by the Almighty to be for their greatest good, all things considered, instead of their constituting a real part of the exceeding great reward of those “who through faith and patience” finally “inherit the promises.”[‡] And as to necessary incitements unto a holy life, it seems impossible for the pious soul to conceive of any more powerful than a Bible full of such “exceeding, great, and” eternal “precious promises,” mingled with repeated divine *assurances* (not the promise) of no real unsupplied want even in this vale of tears, for all the truly faithful.

^{*} Ps. 19: 11. [†] Ps. 119: 165. [‡] Heb. 6: 12.

PRINCIPLE IV.

THE various threatenings of God against the violation of his law, are the portion of none but the ungodly, and to be suffered by them all without distinction, not in a state of probation, but in the world of woe forever.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

It is here admitted that all the afflictions of the present life, are the real *consequences* of sin—that they are all directly from the hand of God—that they are all deserved, and infinitely more, could sin be truly punished in the present life. Still, it must remain, that they are not a part of the divine judgment, or wrath of God upon individuals, to vindicate his violated law; nor upon nations, so long as they are in a state of probation, experiencing the mercy and long suffering of the Lord in sparing them from the pit of woe. Although many may have supposed that the curse of the law threatened against sinners, consists very much in such things as the overthrow of nations in a political capacity—the blighting of their earthly greatness and power—the evils now resting on the scattered Jews—great calamities with awful unnatural temporal deaths, &c., visited on sinners thought to be the worst; it must be admitted as a fact, that all these things, so far as considered distinct from the endless sufferings of the second death,* are comparatively as

* Rev. 20: 12—15.

nothing—were never designed as a vindication of God's broken law, and cannot be accepted by the Lord as doing it at all. Such evils, therefore, are the natural unavoidable *consequences* of sin, which has entered into the world, and not the curse of heaven upon those experiencing them, while, at the same time, such persons are borne up from the pit by him—living upon his bounties, and enjoying offers of eternal life through faith in the Mediator.

PROOF OF THE PRINCIPLE.

1. The *endless* and *infinite* nature of the punishment due for a single unpardoned sin, hinders its being divided, so as to bring a detached portion of it from eternity into time.*

2. Punishment like this, it is evident, can never in reality begin to be experienced, except at the soul's immediately quitting the body.

3. Observation and the Bible have ever proved, that the saints usually suffer more natural evil in the world, than incorrigible sinners, while surely, the saints suffer not the curse of the law, since in Christ their iniquity is pardoned, and their sin remembered no more.†

4. The saints' earthly portion is one of peculiar trial, tribulation, and persecution ; and so much the more so, as they shall be the more faithful ; while none can reasonably say, that these things are the penalty of the law. Why, then, should it be said that the same things are this penalty, when suffered by the wicked ?‡

5. Earthly sufferings or afflictions, however multiplied or severe, cannot be the threatened curse, because their natural tendency and design are to “work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” for all who are willing thus to improve them.§

6. Even the ten plagues suffered by Pharaoh, that mighty

* Mat 25: 41, 46. Rev. 14: 11. Jude 5: 7. † Jer. 31: 34. ‡ Luke 16: 25. 2 Tim. 3: 12. Rev. 7: 14. § 2 Cor. 4: 17.

example of hardness in sin, were evidently no curse to him, as they seemed in their tendency, well nigh humbling him to repentance, though hardening himself again so soon, every time after their removal, which was at his earnest request.*

7. In proof that a frightful, or very unnatural death, is no part of the threatened curse of God upon sinners, it is well known that the saints, in being taken instantly from their earthly troubles to their eternal rest, have frequently died as frightfully, so to speak, as the most ungodly; by lightning, drowning, cholera, &c.

8. Christ expressly exposed the falsehood of the tradition maintained by some, that earthly sufferings, or even a frightful form of temporal death, are the curse of God upon sinners, by his solemn admonition and declaration to those who believed the tradition, while most positively assuring them that temporal death by the sword of Pilate, or the providential fall of the tower in Siloam, was no token of one's being a greater sinner than another; warning them of the fact, that they must all likewise perish as awfully, except saved by a timely repentance.†

The great danger and evil of the unscriptural tradition here refuted, is, that it serves as the corner stone of what is called Universalism, in helping the wicked one to deceive the ungodly, with the falsehood that they are, even now, suffering, and "damned" for their sins, as threatened in the scriptures, according to their deserts; thus making themselves to feel secure in their open practical denial of the necessity of Christ's atonement, till too late for a remedy in their case. In the general

APPLICATION of the preceding Principle, and others in unison with it, the student of the Prophecies will accordingly be led to the conclusion, that the threatened prophetic overthrow and destruction of cities distinguished for their wickedness, such as *Babylon—Egypt—Moab—Edom—*

* Exod. 9: 27, 34, 35, &c. † Luke 13: 1—5.

Jerusalem, and others, when fully and finally accomplished, according to the spirit of the prophecy, must include the overthrow and ruin of all the ungodly with Antichrist in hell, since it is proved that nothing short of that can ever vindicate the divine law in their case, for which object only, the dreadful penalty is to be inflicted.

The fact that God has chosen these various names of very wicked cities or nations as figures of the various departments of Satan's kingdom, should be no barrier in the way of readily seeing the force of the truth in the threatening, since the instruction is no more figurative than was the acknowledged custom with Christ in his parables of spiritual things, and in the whole book of the Revelation.*

* See Principle VII.

PRINCIPLE V.

THE distance of the final judgment appears to have been neither foretold nor foreseen, by any of the prophets of the Old or New Testaments, and for aught they knew, was near at hand when they wrote.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Should it be taken for granted, as it is supposed many have done, that the prophets generally had a vision or revelation of the real distance of the great day when they wrote, or of the thousands of years then to pass away before its coming, together with the great political events of those centuries, it would be natural to search the prophecies, with the expectation of being entertained more or less with such things. But if those writers have not presumed to say how far off, nor near at hand, is the great day, and have not of course attempted to fill up the long period, now expired, with such political affairs; they must, then, have filled their books with the more spiritual affairs and interests of mankind; and we should wander in darkness altogether, were we to search their writings, expecting to find things of which they never wrote, and of which they could have had no distinct knowledge.

PROOF OF THE PRINCIPLE.

1. "Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand, it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty."* "Alas, for the

* Isa. 13: 8.

day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty."* "For the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand."† "Hold thy peace, at the presence of the Lord, for the day of the Lord is at hand."‡ "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly."|| "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels, but my Father only."§ "But this I say, brethren, the time is short."¶ "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall be caught up together with him in the clouds."** "But the end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."†† "Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."‡‡ "He that testifieth these things, saith, Surely, I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus."|||

These passages, it will be seen, as a specimen of many others, prove that it was common for the holy writers to speak not only as though they thought it possible that the final judgment were then near at hand, but as though they thought it indeed probable.

2. There are supposed to be no passages in all the prophetical writings, which, with a scriptural construction, can be understood as directly, or indirectly fixing the distance of the great day, and showing that any of them knew, but it was then actually at hand.

3. It seems like a display of the divine wisdom in keeping the distance of that day a profound secret, since, had it been known by mankind from the first to be thousands of years off, as it was, it would naturally have injured the divine word, in its power to slay the carnal mind. Under such circumstances, sinners might be more easily tempted to delay their necessary preparation for it, than when left to tremble under

* Joel 1: 15. † Joel 2: 1. ‡ Zeph. 1: 7. || Zeph. 1: 14. § Mat. 24: 36, &c. ¶ 1 Cor. 7: 29. ** 1 Thess. 4: 15, 17. †† 1 Pet. 4: 7. ‡‡ James 5: 8. ||| Rev. 22: 12.

the apprehension of its being near at hand. Should it be said, that there is no difference in this respect, between the two cases, it being sure that the *souls* of all the present generation of man must shortly appear before God; it might be replied, that as "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,"* seeming scarcely to know that they have *souls* to be judged; the difference must be great between the cases, when properly understood, and faithfully exhibited by the church to others. When even the hardest sinners are constrained to feel the force of the truth, that something of themselves, as important in their dark view as their very *bodies*, may be sending up the smoke of their torment "forever and ever,"† to commence perhaps this very day, it is certainly calculated to move their minds very differently, from the soothing idea to them, that their beloved, and idolized bodies are secure from the judgment for thousands of years yet to come.

4. Christ himself has expressly and repeatedly confirmed the truth of this Principle, not only by declarations that neither men nor angels have obtained a knowledge of the day of his final appearing, but when curiously inquired of, to know the time when he should "restore again the kingdom to Israel," ("the saints,"‡) he gave them to understand that the time was, indeed, one of the secrets of the Lord; in his significant reply—"It is not for you to know the times, or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."§ It would not seem like a logical, or scriptural way of evading the force of these and other parallel passages, in an attempt to find a predicted *year* for the coming of this event, should an opponent say, that although the precise *day* and *hour* of the event may not be foretold, the identical *year* of it is re-

* 1 Cor. 2: 14, 15. † Rev. 14: 11. ‡ Dan. 7: 18, 22, 27. Mat. 25: 34. § Acts 1: 7.

vealed in the prophets. Sure, the Lord has never been thus captious in the difference of terms so comparatively trifling.

5. The uniform practice of all the apostles seems to have been on the ground of supposing it even probable that the coming of the Lord was then so near, that in the shortness of human life, they might not experience death before the approach of the great day.

APPLICATION. It may be considered remarkable, that in all the New Testament, among the arguments to persuade men to the most immediate repentance, no sinner is ever there admonished of the fact that he will assuredly experience temporal death. It is not in their writings ever said, as has been common since, "One thing is certain, and that is, we must all die," because, to their knowledge, the fact was not certain, since it rather appears by their writings, that they knew not but they might themselves be caught up alive to meet Christ in the air, before having sufficient time to live out a common life; for some of them expressed themselves, saying, "We shall not all sleep, [in a temporal death,] but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump."* None of the apostles, except Peter, as it appears, ever spake with assurance of the certainty of his own death of the body. Neither could he have known this, had not Christ expressly told him "by what death he should glorify God," as Peter himself acknowledges.†

Should it be said, that Paul also spake of the certainty of his own death by martyrdom, in saying—"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand,"‡ it might be replied, that he intended rather to show his constant preparedness to meet the Judge, viewing the time all ways as being at hand; as all of us are required to be also

* 1 Cor. 15: 51, 52. † John 21: 18, 19. 2 Pet. 1: 14, 15. ‡ 2. Tim. 4: 6.

ready. He evidently then had no knowledge nor expectation of a speedy martyrdom, in his being "ready to be offered," as will appear from the facts of his next requiring Timothy, in the same chapter, to be diligent in coming to him—to bring Mark with him to help him (the Apostle Paul) in the ministry, and to bring his cloak and parchments, "before winter."* All this shows, that though always ready to depart, he then knew of nothing to hinder his work in the ministry till "winter" at least, not knowing the time, nor manner of his glorifying God, as in the case of Peter.

Notwithstanding the apostles always wrote, spake, and acted, as though the final judgment, for aught they knew, might then be near, Paul did once say—"That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."† How soon this revelation of the man of sin was to take place, was to be unknown till accomplished, then near at hand, for aught the apostle knew.

Although eighteen centuries have now passed since the crucifixion of Christ, without yet witnessing his glorious second coming, so commonly held up by the holy writers as near by, none have ever been too solemnly warned to make the most hasty and full preparations for the great day; while all who have met their Judge, in passing the gates of death, during this period, have at once experienced its realities, infinitely beyond all they could conceive, from what they learnt of it by the holy writings, in their exhibiting it as though always near at hand.

From the fact, that the holy writers did not know but the end of the world was actually at hand when they wrote, we are most seriously admonished against interpreting any of their writings as predictions of the judgment thousands of years off; and against understanding them as the predictions

* 2 Tim. 4: 9, 11, 21. † 2 Thess. 2: 3.

of the mere rise and fall of successive earthly kingdoms, since their times and seasons could not be foretold nor foreknown, by the prophets, for want of a knowledge that the world would stand long enough for them to take place. We should, then, rather search those writings in view of the conflicts between the powers of light and darkness in the world, in which all mankind have individually a common and mighty interest, either for good or for evil, as they shall be found enlisted for Christ, or Antichrist, in the great contest. This warfare will be carried on with occasional greater or less alternate success, by the two conflicting parties, until the coming of Christ with the armies of heaven, "to the battle of that great day of God Almighty,"* when suddenly the powers of hell must fall, even into the bottomless pit,† or lake of fire,‡ to rise no more; and "the saints of the Most High" shall triumph in victory, and "take the kingdom"|| prepared for them "from the foundation of the world."§

* Rev. 16: 14. † Rev. 18: 1. 20: 3. ‡ Rev. 20: 10, 14, 15. § Dan. 7: 18, 27. ¶ Mat. 25: 34.

PRINCIPLE VI.

DAYS, weeks, months, and years, occasionally mentioned in the prophetical writings, are generally, if not always, figurative, representing indefinite, rather than definite periods of time, or duration.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Although the objection might arise that times and seasons are used but in vain, in the prophecies, unless, as elsewhere, to signify definite periods, it should be recollected that in those very figurative writings, as it is in the well understood parables of Christ, some things are occasionally inserted as matters of convenience in speaking "after the manner of men,"* and in making the type more full or consistent with itself; while the connexion and other suitable helps are at hand to show what impressions are, and are not to be made with the full set type on the occasion.

Notwithstanding a general prevailing impression that the seventy weeks of Dan. 9: 24, did actually prove to be a definite period of 490 years to the coming of Christ in the flesh, which would make each day in those seventy weeks, to signify one full year, it is apparent that the connexion does not authorize this liberty of making these days then to mean full years, though a reliance on profane history in establishing times and seasons, has with some settled the question.

* Rom. 6: 19. Gal. 3: 15.

Should it even be granted that set times in the prophecies are given as definite periods, it is plain that the scriptures do not authorize us, once for all, in any instance, to consider, as some have presumed to do, every period there mentioned, to signify at their option, 365 or 360 times as much actual duration as specified in the given period. Neither can it be made clear from any source, that the term "*Seven times*,"* signifies seven literal years any more than it does seven literal months or days; nor that the still more indefinite terms, viz: "*A time, and times, and half a time*,"† are given to signify one year, two years, and half a year; for us to add together and then to multiply them by 360, the alleged number of prophetic days in a year, to make the periods just 1260 years, in making it harmonize with the 160 days,‡ also called by some, so many literal years; and to agree with the "*forty and two months*,"|| and "*three days and a half*,"§ mentioned in the same prophecy, all supposed by many to signify the same 1260 years. But were it granted that each day in these prophecies signifies one literal year, it is embarrassing to see how so many centuries can be made up of entire years, which would be a little more than five days and a half shorter than the perpetual annual revolutions of the earth round the sun, consisting as such revolutions do, of years a little longer than $365\frac{1}{4}$ days each. The same embarrassment is in the way, in regard to considering the "*forty and two months*" to signify literally, 1260 years, because of its allowing those months to contain on an average, but 30 days each, in order to call their sum 1260 days, as before; and then to be enlarged to the same number of years. If these latter supposed years are to be considered as natural and full years of $365\frac{1}{4}$ days each, as seems designed, it is hard, after all, to make them lie even, side by side, with the other 1260 years of only 360 days to a year.

* Dan. 4: 16, 23, 25. † Dan. 12: 7. Rev. 12: 14. ‡ Rev. 11 3. || Rev. 11: 2. § Rev. 11: 9, 11. 13: 5.

With regard to making the three days and an half to signify the same 1260 years, the liberty in doing it is still greater and equally at variance with the measure of literal years, as the earth's revolutions have always measured them. In the first place, in this latter process, the three days and a half are multiplied by 360 literal days; then in calling their 360 fold increase *years*, instead of days, is the same as multiplying them again by 365 $\frac{1}{4}$, + the number of days in a natural year. These are some of the difficulties in attempting to make literal and definite periods out of the prophetic times, without having divine authority for such enlargement upon enlargement in framing them together. It is true, however, that Ezekiel was directed to lie upon his left side in bearing the iniquities of Israel, and on his right side in doing the same for Judah; a given number of days, and "each day for a year,"* and that in a few other instances in the scriptures, there is something of the like, such as seven years called a week,† and the spies of Israel searching the land of Canaan "even forty days, each day for a year."‡ Still, we seem not authorized from any thing in connexion with these passages, to interpret other prophetic times and seasons, so as to understand *days*, to signify *years*, occasionally at our option, when best suiting our purpose.

With regard to "the number of the Beast," which "is six hundred, three score and six,"§ sometimes considered as so many literal years of the reign of pagan powers, without the supposed prophetic custom of considering each day for a year, it should be remembered, whatever else this number was designed to represent, and though at present not clear, that the connection of the passage does not show

* Ezck. 4: 4. 6. † Gen. 29: 27, 28. ‡ Num. 14: 34. § Rev. 13: 18.

it, as having reference, even to the *subject* of time in any shape.

PROOF of the principle.

1. The prophets having no revelation themselves of long continued duration before the judgment, could not, if they would, fix definite times and seasons* at any considerable distance between themselves and that great day.

2. The prophetic times and seasons are usually connected with instructions which are admitted to be figurative, so that there appears no reason against the conclusion that other similar *times* are also figurative of duration, not intended to be defined, to be fulfilled sometimes on earth, and sometimes in the spiritual world.

3. In figurative prophecy, where times and seasons are specified, there is nothing definite and clear, to show where to fix the *beginning* of such periods, leaving us still in the dark as to the period of their accomplishment, even were they considered as definite portions of time.

4. It would seem, all things considered, that no special good, but rather evil, would be the natural consequence to the souls of mankind, by their being furnished with a clear and distinct knowledge of such definite times and seasons, as a secular curiosity would always desire to obtain.

5. It is not according to the wisdom and benevolence of the Most High, in giving prophecies to his people expressly to promote their spiritual and eternal interests, that he should place the common events of long continued definite times and seasons in their way, which would be as a bait for their curiosity, and otherwise to engross their minds, thus hindering, more than helping, their speedy preparation for the judgment.

6. The declaration of Christ, as mentioned under the

* Acts 1: 7. See Prin. V.

fifth Principle, that the Father has put in his own power, those times and seasons not for his people to know, is further proof of this principle.

7. In a variety of the prophetic times and seasons, their connexion makes it at once plain to every reader, that they are figurative, as in the following instances: "And it shall come to pass from one *new moon* to *another*, and from one *sabbath* to *another*, shall all flesh come and worship before me, saith the Lord."* This being, as shown in the connexion, within the "new heavens and new earth,"† or heavenly state, can only denote *perpetuity* of the heavenly worship, instead of any thing of literal weeks and monthly changes of the moon, when literal time shall be no more. "Behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, and you shall have tribulation *ten days*,"‡ (short time.) "And they rest not *day* and *night*, saying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! which was, and is, and is to come."§ "And in the midst of it, [New Jerusalem,] and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bear twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit *every month*."|| In passages like these, it is most apparent, that in figurative prophecy, the Lord is in the habit of using times and seasons figuratively. By what authority then, can we safely interpret such times and seasons in other similar prophecies, as representing literal and definite portions of time?

With these views of prophetic time, we necessarily and at once reject, as a dream or a fable, all labors bestowed on this subject in studying out and calculating the literal periods from Daniel, and onward through the christian dispensation to the coming of the kingdom of God. Such

* Isa. 66: 23. † Isa. 66: 22, 55: 17. 2 Pet. 3: 13. Rev. 21: 1.
‡ Rev. 2: 10. § Rev. 4: 8. || Rev. 22: 2.

calculations, surely, are labors for becoming wise above what is written. Let us then rather remember, that, instead of the Lord's so far employing us in the examination of political and temporal affairs through long and definite periods of time, he is uniformly calling us all to consider, and most seriously to regard the great interests of our own and others' souls, as having a connexion with the kingdoms of light and darkness now conflicting together in the world, but soon to be separated eternally, when time shall pass away.

PRINCIPLE VII.

THE prophets of both the Old and New Testaments, gave their visions which related to spiritual and everlasting things, in figurative language, with frequent repetitions of the same things in different figures.

I. PROOF: *That such Prophecies are thus figurative.*

1. The goodness of God and necessity of man would naturally conspire to make them so, since it is known that man can have no conceptions of spiritual or invisible realities, except by their being shown to him with figures borrowed from the visible things of his acquaintance, which then, is but seeing them "through a glass darkly."*

2. Jesus Christ always gave his instructions concerning spiritual things, in various striking figures, as in the parable of the prodigal son—the rich man and Lazarus—his account of the latter day, and his coming to judgment.†

3. Paul and Peter were uniformly very figurative, when laboring to make the deepest impressions of invisible things upon the mind, as in Paul's description of the christian armor,‡ and Peter's description of Christ's final coming.§

4. All the prophets of the Old and New Testaments, including Moses and the Psalms, together with the Apostles,

* 1 Cor. 13 : 12. † Luke 16th Chap. and Mat. 24th and 25th Chaps.
‡ Eph. 6th Chap. § 2 Pet. 3d Chap.

and book of Revelation, on careful examination, appear to contain in substance, precisely the same instruction of invisible things, and to communicate it in the same manner of typical language, though they have wisely chosen various different types in doing it to our best advantage.

5. Paul has frequently affirmed, in the most clear terms, that this was the way of the ancient Prophets, in showing mankind invisible realities, by saying of the Old Testament prophecies, that they are *allegorical—figurative—typical*, and *shadowy*, as in the following expressions concerning various particulars of the Old Testament writings, which, as it is presumed many readers have considered as not at all typical, viz: "Which things were an allegory."* "Now these things were our examples,"† (or figures.‡) "Now all these things happened unto them for enamples,"§ (or types.||) "Having a shadow of good things to come."¶

II. PROOF: *That the Prophets repeated their Instruction.*

1. Such a repetition and variety were necessary for the greatest good of mankind during all ages, and amidst all places of the world, until the end of time, so that although no other revelation is to be given, persons in every country and age of the world, in searching the scriptures, may readily find some, at least, of such figures of instruction, clear and striking to their own view.

2. Even the same individuals, to increase their interest in attending to the same instruction, have need of all that variety which can be given it in repeated figures by the inspired penmen.

3. The most spiritually minded hearers of the gospel now, would consider it unpardonable, as it were, in their

* Gal. 4: 24. † 1 Cor. 10: 6. ‡ See marginal reading. § 1 Cor. 10: 11. || Col. 2: 17. ¶ Heb. 10: 1. See Heb. 8: 5. 9: 24. 11: 19.

most acceptable preachers, should they cease to use their present mode of repeating and illustrating the same great things of the gospel, in continued variations of figures and forms of expression. And shall not the All Wise be allowed to be as wise as man, who "is of yesterday" and knows "nothing."*

4. God himself, by the prophet, virtually declares that his word does contain precisely this mode of giving instruction on the great subject which it every where keeps uppermost in view; as by giving figure upon figure, figure upon figure, to illustrate and impress the same truth, expressed by the Holy Ghost, as follows: "But the word of the Lord *was* unto them, precept upon precept, precept upon precept—line upon line, line upon line—here a little and there a little."† This passage in proof that the word of God is expressed with so much repeating of the same great things in different illustrations and forms of speech, shows also, that it is not done to turn off the reader with *vain* repetitions, but that it is done as a wonderful coming down of the Most High, to meet man's feeble comprehension, and dullness of hearing and understanding, so as to teach him the same great truth, over and over—over and over, with a mere little in one form, and a little in another, or "a little here and a little there," being very much like the manner in which the dull school-boy may learn his lesson, if he will.

As examples of oft repeated figures in a single chapter of the prophets to set forth something of the glorious blessedness of the heavenly state when attained, the 60th chapter of Isaiah, is a very fair specimen, together with multiplied portions, at least, of others in various books of

* Job. 8: 9.

† Isa. 28: 10. 13.

the Bible, which are parallel with this, notwithstanding the fact, that so many have chosen to apply this whole chapter to Jews as such, instead of allowing all saints a participation in the promises there exhibited, while they have also considered it, as setting forth earthly, rather than heavenly, attainments. The 6th and 16th chapters of Revelation are also suggested as fair specimens of single chapters, quite full of figures, repeated, showing the final overthrow and miseries of all the damned, in connexion with the powers of darkness, then to be trodden under foot of Christ and his people. The 6th shows them very briefly, as in the awful events disclosed at the opening of the seven strong seals of a book, which none shall be able to open, except "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," while the 16th shows the same great things, as in the events of pouring out the seven vials of the wrath of God upon all the ungodly. While the unbelieving, secular, and grovelling, may choose to do away the power of these and other parallel prophecies of the final end of all God's enemies, by interpreting them as representing rather some shocking events of the present life, mostly long passed already, and as the special doom of Mahometan or papal sinners, or both, as though the ungodly of Christendom have no cause to tremble and howl, in view of such threatenings; wisdom evidently requires all to submit at once to the thundering tones of the divine word, in these threatenings against sinners of every rank and station generally, both without and within the visible inclosures of the Church, consenting to "let God be true, but every man a liar."*

* Rom. 3: 4.

PRINCIPLE VIII.

THE Prophets generally wrote of the spiritual, rather than the secular interests of God's flock, and of mankind generally.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

It will be admitted by all the lovers of the Bible, that this Principle involves things of the deepest interest in relation to a right understanding and use of the Holy Scriptures as means of grace. In their proving quick and powerful to affect the human heart, there can be no doubt that their original spirituality should be understood and impressed as far as possible. But considering the unwearied vigilance of the false prophet, also called anti-Christ, with all his adherents, for 1800 years of Christ's personal absence from his little flock on earth, in efforts to corrupt the word and starve the flock, while comparatively it has long exhibited symptoms of being overcome and famished in regard to its spirituality or vital godliness, it should not be thought surprising if the true spirituality of the Bible has been much taken from it by interpretations to suit the carnal mind which are false, and more naturally calculated to slay or starve the hungry soul, than to give it strength and growth in grace. And though we may feel the necessity

and importance of remedying such an evil, we should no more spiritualize those parts of the word which are preceptive and historical, than we should secularize those which are already spiritual, and need no change for the better. No doubt both these practices have prevailed to a mischievous degree in the Church in latter ages; and probably the habit of spiritualizing things not spiritual in the word, has resulted mostly from the more general fact, that the spiritual portions of it have been secularized to the starving of the spiritual mind, thus tempting the soul to convert or alter some of it into better food, rather than suffer so great abstinence.

Proof of the Principle.

1. There is apparently no absolute need of a revelation by the holy prophets designed specially for the worldly interests of men, since it must be granted that the physical laws, which God has established, with appropriate penalties of corporeal suffering, are naturally sufficient in the animal kingdom for all that bodily comfort, which on the whole is best. This is manifest from the natural manner in which both animals and unbelievers are provided for, in regard to their bodies.

2. It might seem unnatural that God should give mankind a revelation concerning their earthly interests, while, at the same time, admonishing them against taking any thought for future earthly things; and considering them as not possessing any worldly interest really their own.*

3. So far as the prophetic writings might be prepared specially in view of man's worldly interests, it would seem that in meditating them day and night, as the saints are bound to do, they would just so far rather retard than pro-

* Mat. 6: 19—34. Ps. 50: 9—12. John 16: 33.

mote their real and great spiritual interests, since it is known that the burdening of the mind with worldly things, naturally tends to make it carnal, in resisting the Spirit.

4. It is perfectly characteristic of the blessed God in making a revelation to convert men away from the things of the world, to the things of the Spirit, that in such a revelation he should principally dwell on spiritual, rather than on worldly things.

5. The perpetual meditation of the word of God, is sweeter than honey to the spiritual mind* which could not be, were it not very spiritual.

6. The instructions of the *Psalms*, *Jesus Christ*, and the *Apostles*, relate, as we know, to men's spiritual interests, almost wholly if not quite; then why shall we not thus consider other parts as written in the same way, since all were written by the same spirit, and for the same great end?

7. It might seem as a libel upon the Almighty to suppose him to be communing with his people in his holy word, in order to assist in the indulgence of their carnal appetites, or treating at all on that subject, except when directly turning the whole to the promotion of their infinite and everlasting interests.

8. Christ himself has appeared conclusively to establish the truth of this principle; by saying—"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the *words* that I speak unto you, they *are* spirit, and they *are* life."†

Considering, as we are bound to do, the whole Bible as much the word of Christ, in the design and essence of it, as any of his words in the New Testament, since we are told that "the Spirit of Christ" was in the prophets, "when it

* Ps. 119: 97. 103.

† John 6: 63.

testified before hand, the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow,"* the point seems clear, that all the prophets wrote the same spiritual "words" which Christ spoke. In the general

APPLICATION of this important principle to the various prophetic writings, it cannot be expected, in the present famished state of the Church, that the saints themselves will be at first agreed in their opinions, to what extent it may be applied. In regard to an invariable rule of application, or precise line of distinction between things to be understood, as most directly of spiritual things, and others more remotely so, it is believed that none can be established which shall be satisfactory in all cases, even to the most diligent student of the scriptures, especially while there is so little of the Spirit of the Lord allowed a resting place in the Church, as at present, and while too, it is apprehended, that our version of the holy oracles is by no means a perfect transcript of what they were when coming directly from the heart of the Lord, and before being contaminated at all by human touch. Although, at present, none of us may be able in all cases, to decide what portions of the holy writings are directly spiritual, or designed to show spiritual things, we may be assisted by a careful knowledge and observance of admitted principles of interpretation, to decide with satisfaction to our own minds in regard to the application of this Principle to a very great proportion of the Bible, always considering it better to suffer a passage to remain uninterpreted, than to violate any acknowledged principle of interpretation in explaining it. This question may be resumed under the next Principle.

In relation to the application of this Principle, to some

* 1 Pet. 1: 11.

supposed safe extent, even under present embarrassments, a few words may be said concerning some important portions of the Bible; a due consideration of which may lead the reader to a confidence in proceeding still further in making the application to suit his own mind.

PSALMS.

In the carrying out of this principle and others which are virtually the same, we are led to the conclusion that the book of the Psalms, is a series of devotional exercises, in the most perfect forms of worship, instead of their being, as some have supposed, the mere private experience of the holy writer. These forms of worship appear entirely spiritual—designed for, and adapted to the conditions and wants of all the suffering children of Zion, in all nations and ages of the Church. They may be said to express, among other things, the general experience of Zion, specially appropriate to a spiritual, rather than a backslidden state; containing their *confessions—complaints—prayers—thanksgivings—praises—admonitions—instructions—encouragement—arguments—predictions—anticipations—longings—trials—griefs—confidence—covenants renewed, &c.* They are equally suitable for individuals—families—circles—congregations, and the whole of Zion as a body. This view of the subject, it will be seen, is both reasonable and scriptural, and may be considered as a fair inference from the fact, that the singular and plural number of the pronouns I, &c., first person, are so frequently and alternately used, even in the same Psalm, and sometimes in the same sentence,* while some of the psalms are occupied

* Ps. 144 : 11, 12.

only with the singular, and others with the plural number. The 51st is a specimen of the singular only, the 46th of the plural, and the 137th of the singular and plural. Sometimes, where the singular is used, the connexion shows that it is adapted specially to all Zion as a body, who are yet scattered in the world, finally to be gathered, as in the following passages—"He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters."*—"From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee."†

In view of these considerations, it may be seen that the numerous prayers in the Psalms, as a part of Zion's spiritual worship, which contain petitions for the overthrow and utter destruction of her enemies, are as suitable for *individual* saints *now*, as for the whole body of them, and as for the holy writer 3,000 years ago, and as suitable for our daily use, not as prayers for evil of any kind, to fall on the wicked while still in a state of probation, but rather—"When he ["the man of sin"] shall be judged, let him be condemned, and let his prayer become sin."‡ Thus, it may be seen, that these solemn prayers, which being improperly understood, have been so great a trial to the saints, are only as the various branches of Zion's forms of prayer for the hastening of the blessed kingdom of Christ in its glory; which cannot truly come, except as the saints shall obtain a glorious victory, with Christ in his coming, over all their combined enemies, both men and devils, when all those powers of darkness, shall "go down quick into hell,"§ and "there shall be none to deliver."|| On a faithful comparison, it will be seen, that these solemn prayers, so common in the Psalms, are, in substance, precisely like

* Ps. 18: 16. See Rev. 17: 15. † Ps. 65: 5. ‡ Ps. 109: 7. § Ps. 55: 15. || Ps. 50: 22.

that blessed petition in the Lord's prayer—" *Thy kingdom come,*"* which it is well known, never can fully come, except in connexion with the downfall and destruction, as repeatedly predicted, of the whole kingdom of Satan, when not one incorrigible sinner will escape. For this coming of Christ, the saints were directed, even in the Jewish dispensation, continually to offer their prayers, as follows—"Prayer also, shall be made for him continually, and daily shall he be praised."† Other inspired forms of prayer for Zion recognise the same coming of Christ in his glory.‡ And it may not be amiss here to mention, to the saints of some connexions, that a great assembly of their pious fathers in the ministry, at Westminster, England, two hundred years ago, so understood this short, but comprehensive petition of the Lord's prayer. They have faithfully told their children or posterity, that, in this "petition, which is, *Thy kingdom come,* we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, the kingdom of grace advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened."§ While this very explanation is still sacredly preserved in the "Confessions" of no small portion of the Christian Church, that portion surely cannot consistently be slow to admit its truth.

The warring and fighting, so frequently exhibited in the Psalms, must of course be considered the same as that of which Paul, in the New-Testament, treats largely, for which he exhorts the saints to "put on the whole armor of God," not to "fight against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the

* Mat. 6: 10. † Ps. 72: 15. ‡ Ps. 7: 6. 40: 17. 68: 1. 144: 5-7. Isa. 64: 1-4. § See Assembly's Shorter Catechism.

darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."*

ISAIAH--JEREMIAH--EZEKIEL.

In these books, according to "the first principles of the oracles of God;" it is understood that things are very generally unfolded, which are incomparably more impressive and stirring to the soul, than the mere worldly triumphs or defeats of the ancient Jews, in their conflicts with flesh and blood, or the similar prosperities and afflictions of the benighted political powers around them. In those writings and others of a similar caste, in the Prophets, shall we not rather look for a revelation of matters generally, which are akin, at least, to such as are now said to be found in the Psalms, and which, mostly, can be rationally so explained while leaving them clothed with a divine power, as doubtless they were originally given, and all this without doing violence to common sense, or any palpable rule of interpretation?

LAMENTATIONS.

In accordance with the above and other parallel principles, the book of *Lamentations* will not be understood as the mere private experience and moanings of the writer, and principally, too, of his own and the Jews' momentary *worldly* calamities and depressions at that particular time, as some have been led to suppose; but rather the book appears capable of being understood as containing, prophetically, as it were, the spiritual exercises and devotions of

* Eph. 6: 11—19.

Zion, as a very desolate and afflicted woman, in view of her most depressed state on earth, suffering the overcoming spiritual conflicts of the powers of darkness, instead of *visible* bitter persecutions for righteousness' sake, at which, the saints are to "rejoice and be exceeding glad,"* rather than use these lamentations. These forms of lamentation in worship, may be understood as harmonizing in spirit with those of the Psalms, though as having a more appropriate reference to a depressed and down trodden state of the Church, than in case of many of the Psalms in treating of Zion's wars and triumphs over her enemies. Those exercises of the Lamentations, if thus understood, will seem at once suitable, as forms in which the saints may express their lamentations in view of the present dreadfully fallen state of the Church, compared with the vital godliness of primitive christianity, or that faith which was then delivered unto and exercised by the saints.

DANIEL.

So far as this principle, and others like it, shall be adopted and applied, by the reader of the Bible, he will look in the book of *Daniel* for things and events which are infinitely more interesting and important to the spiritual mind, and in the sight of God, as means of grace and food for the hungry soul, than the mere political achievements, or defeats of Alexander, Cyrus, Bonaparte, and others like them, either heretofore or hereafter. Prophecies, if given for such events, and fulfilled in such things, it is certain now, can never become the saints' spiritual meat, and the sword of the spirit, in overcoming their enemies, for which

* Mat. 5: 10-12.

we know the Bible was given. The repeated experience of such events, has already demonstrably proved the position here taken. Then should not the book of Daniel be searched with the expectation of finding it to contain prophecies throughout, (though expressed in a figure,) written mostly, if not altogether, in view of Zion's spiritual interests, rather than the secular concerns of others entirely foreign to the great work of converting, sanctifying and saving the otherwise for ever lost souls of his flock?

REVELATION.

If these things are so in the principles of interpreting the Prophecies, must we not also look in the prophetic Book of the *Revelation*, for predictions and instructions vastly more quickening and useful to Zion, than a mere narrative of, and private instructions to seven, then literal and fallen branches of the Church in Asia Minor,* or the exploits of Mahomet, Constantine, Pagan or Papal Rome, or the earthly defeats which any of them, or others like them, are to experience hereafter, this side of the bottomless pit? And shall we not then find, that the terrible admonitions, rebukes and threatenings of Jesus Christ to the seven churches of Asia, were expressly designed by him to apply directly, though under seven different figures, to a prophetic state, or latter day of the Church? And should we not find the whole most perfectly to accord with the present Laodicean state of the Church on earth, embracing, as might be supposed, not the mere professing part of the visible flock of God, but their posterity, even all christendom, standing in the vineyard of the Lord, and abusing it?

* Rev. 9d and 3d chaps.

And should we not find in the other parts of this book, and others, so far as akin to it, throughout the Bible, in multiplied instances, things and events no less important and interesting to Zion, than exhibitions of the realities of the heavenly state*—the world of wo†—the latter day—conflicts and overcoming powers‡ of the beast for a short time, against the spiritual interests of Zion, and the continued struggling for conquest, of the powers of light and darkness together, without respect to definite times and seasons; which conflicts shall continue with great interest in view of the Lord, till the great day, when Christ shall come “in flaming fire,”§ and with all “the armies of heaven,”|| to fight with Almighty power, once for all, for his people, delivering them in an instant, to the glorious and everlasting liberty of the children of God,¶ in the sudden destruction of all their enemies without remedy?*** If these things are so, then should we not find that *Satan*,†† *Anti-christ*,‡‡ *son of perdition*, *man of sin*,§§ *the beast*,||| *Babylon*, *mother of harlots*,¶¶ *Jezebel*,*** *the false Prophet*,††† as mentioned in the New Testament, together with the dark kingdom in their connexion, are in substance, the same thing under various significant and appropriate titles comprehending, as may be understood, the various hosts of wicked men and devils, who are to be finally destroyed.

* Rev. 4th, 5th, and 7th chaps. † Rev. 6th, 9th, 16th, and 19th chaps., &c. ‡ Rev. 13: 7, &c. § 2 Thess. 1: 8. || Rev. 19: 14. ¶ Rom. 8: 21. ** Prov. 29: 1. †† Acts 5: 3. ‡‡ 1 John 2: 18. §§ 2 Thess. 2: 3. ||| Rev. 13: 1, &c. ¶¶ Rev. 17: 5. *** Rev. 2: 20. ††† Rev. 19: 20.

PRINCIPLE IX.

The Prophets generally wrote of things then future, rather than a history of past events, even when speaking, as they have done, frequently in the past tense.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Should we do as some have done, in searching the *prophetical* writings in a considerable degree for interesting historical facts of natural things, or such events transpiring when they were written, our time must be spent in dark confusion, and to no good purpose, since it would be searching for things not there to be found, to the overlooking of things there revealed, of infinitely higher importance to be understood in a successful seeking "first the kingdom of God."*

Proof of the Principle.

1. While the writings of "Moses and the Prophets" are represented to be as powerful as witnesses "from the dead," to produce repentance, they cannot rationally be expected to treat very largely on the mere history of visible things, since such history is not naturally of the most converting tendency. The history given by the Evangelists, of Christ's advent, miracles, character, sufferings,

preaching, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, &c., and the Apostles' history of the pouring out and work of the Spirit in that age, were matters of spiritual history so to speak, and indispensably necessary as the Church's means of grace, and not to be classed with other things of an opposite character and tendency.

2. The long apparent inefficacy of the prophetic writings as means of grace, while they have been very much understood as common history, or of secular things, seems to prove that they are perverted when so understood.

3. Inspired testimony is given, that common historic or past events, should rather be forgotten, than faithfully recorded for the memory in a successful running of the Christian race, as given by an apostle: "But this one thing I do, *forgetting* those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."*

4. There are many portions of the prophetic writings which are expressed in the past tense, which the common consent of the Church, has long explained as showing things future when written, such as the birth, miracles, preaching, and sufferings of Christ,† which have since come to pass, precisely as they wrote, though they spake of it as then already past. The most part of the book of Revelation also given in the past tense, is generally admitted by the Church to be of future things when written, though human opinions are diverse with regard to the things what they are.

5. The first verse of the book of Revelation expressly declares the things revealed in that book, to be things then

* Phil. 3: 13, 14.

† Isa. 53d chap.

future, or "things which must shortly come to pass," though so nearly all expressed in the past tense.

6. The promiscuous use of the present, past, and future tenses in the ancient Prophets, shows that the sign of the past tense was no sign against the future fulfilling of the things thus written.* In the

APPLICATION of this principle to the various portions of the Bible, a serious difficulty will, no doubt, often arise, in attempting to determine which portions are indeed prophetic, or of future things, and which are not to be so considered, since both classes of these things are understood to be written in the Bible. Different persons, even of equal intelligence and piety, may be expected not to think alike on the question of a line of distinction between such scriptures; while it will probably continue as it has been, and is now; that more or less, the professed saints will differ widely on the question; so as on the one hand, sometimes to consider *all* parts of the Bible, without exception, a mere figure or allegory; while some others may persist in considering the whole, as perfectly without the figure, in its being all literal. Though such persons may have a fixed rule of determining the question, in their opposite total abstinence from the opinion of each other, while it is believed they are both wrong; we who believe in this division of the scriptures into things prophetic, and things historic, or things figurative, and things literal, cannot avail ourselves of any such invariable rule of determining positively, in all cases, which belong to the one class, and which to the other. And when all the embarrassments known to stand in the way, are considered, it should not be thought strange, even with the best adopted rules of

*See this intermingling of tenses in Isa. 40: 2-6. 53: 1-3. 63: 1-6.

interpreting the prophecies, if the most studious and discriminating should fail of being able to satisfy their own minds in all cases in regard to this question and a clear understanding of the Bible. In general, however, it is believed, that a careful knowledge and observance of principles, such as are attempted to be shown in this manual, will prepare the spiritually minded and the investigating to determine, with great satisfaction to their own minds, what truths the different portions of the Bible were designed to teach; and to detect the error of others in giving false interpretations, copies and translations of the sacred volume. No other rule than those contained in this work is known by the writer for settling these and other hard questions concerning the prophecies; though he considers a far greater proportion of them prophetic than has been commonly supposed by writers on the subject.

In passages where the sense of the text and its connexion, are such as to hinder the clear interpretation of it, except by doing violence to some scripture fact or palpable rule of interpretation, it will be wisest to leave them as dark passages, with the acknowledgment of our ignorance on the subject. When such difficulties are found, and cannot be remedied, the query will naturally arise, whether there may not be some defect, or imperfection in the copy we have of the Holy Writings.

Notwithstanding the means furnished us for obtaining the most faithful translation of the Bible from the Hebrew and Greek, in which they were first written, it seems not unreasonable to conclude, that there may be some imperfection still in the copy we now have of it, which cannot be remedied by a mere reference to the Hebrew and Greek copies from which the scriptures were translated. When it is considered that the false prophet had been busy during

no less than fourteen centuries of Christ's personal absence from the flock, before our translations were made, it would not be strange, if he had succeeded in some particulars, in his attempts to injure the copy or copies of the Bible from which our translations must be taken. This suggestion is the more reasonable from the fact, that the art of printing was not then discovered; private copies in manuscript might lie on hand for centuries without being subject to the scrutiny of the Church; the sense of many words has been liable to alteration in copying and translating by reason of their having various significations in different connexions, while those who may have endeavored to preserve the purity of the Bible, in copying and translating, have not been infallibly guided by the Spirit of God, and so far as participating in the declining state of the Church in which they lived, might be tempted occasionally to receive words in a sense more secular than intended by the Almighty as originally given. This danger, it may be seen, and its injurious effect upon our copy of the scriptures, has been wholly on one side of the question in making them more favorable than originally, to unbelief in Christ, together with a loose and careless manner of obeying them. The evil, of course, is one which the natural man would sooner choose to have faithfully concealed still longer, than brought forward in its true light as an objection against the purity and obligation of the Gospel. At the same time, the faithful witnesses of Christ are furnished with an infallible remedy against such a taking away from "the word of their testimony,"* would they at once become "watchful, and strengthen the things which remain," as required by him who "will come—as a thief."† The Spi-

* Rev. 12: 11.

† Rev. 3: 2, 3.

rit of God, the spirit or general tenor of the Bible as we now have it, with other corresponding helps, will then be sufficient, for the faithful and diligent student of the scriptures, in coming to a satisfactory conclusion in regard to the instances of fundamental error there may be in our copy, whether in the translation or previous copying. In this work of searching out errors in the copy, individuals will be exposed to continued error themselves, in proportion to their lack of the Divine Spirit, and a consistent obedience to the precepts of the Gospel, in their undertaking it.

PRINCIPLE X.

THE Prophets appear not to have clearly distinguished between Christ's first and second coming, nor to have foreseen the several centuries of time which have already passed between them.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Some of the Prophets, it is true, spake as though they had indistinct views of these two events, or of the increase of Christ's kingdom during the Christian dispensation, in passages like the following: "His going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as as the latter and former rain upon the earth,"* "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth."† From these passages, it would seem that the duration of times and seasons, in connexion with Christ's kingdom upon earth, was not in the mind of the Prophets as a subject of revelation. Had it been best on the whole, that these two events should have been distinctly foretold, as being so many centuries apart, no doubt the revelation would have been given.

PROOF of the Principle.

1. Most generally, the Prophets were silent about the events of Christ's first coming, as though having in view

* Hosea 6: 3. See Jer. 5: 24. Joel 2: 23.

† Ps. 72: 6.

only his final coming to judgment, as expressed in the following passage: "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. And I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers," &c.*

2. The Bible, as a means of grace, was, no doubt, more powerful before Christ's first coming, in its always holding up to view his final coming, as though it might be near or without giving a knowledge of the centuries first to take place, since the carnal mind is naturally lulled to sleep by the song of the judgment, thousands of years off.†

3. The Jews of Christ's day, it appears, had generally understood the language of the Prophets as fortelling but one, and that the final coming of Christ, which caused them, on beholding his miracles as foretold of their expected Messiah, to lavish upon him their carnal honors, even attempting by force to make him their king.‡

4. The disciples, as converted Jews, retained the same understanding of these prophecies, saying to Christ, "Lord, wilt thou, at this time, restore again the kingdom to Israel."§

5. Such is the phraseology of the burden of the prophecies concerning Christ's coming, that with our lack of spiritual discernment, we might ourselves have understood them as foretelling his coming but once, had not the events of time since faithfully revealed to us the mistake of this apprehension. The

APPLICATION of this Principle to the prophetical writings, is in substance similar to others, teaching us not to expect in those writings the common secular events of the

* Mal. 3: 2-5. † Matt. 24: 48-52. ‡ John 6: 15. § Acts 1: 6.

Christian dispensation, except when indispensable as means of grace; but things rather, which are more quick and powerful in their operations upon the souls of all who search the scriptures.

PRINCIPLE XI.

WHILE discoursing upon the solemn interests of the judgment and spiritual world; the Prophets could not consistently so digress, as to call off our minds to the comparative worthless interests of time and sense.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

As laid down in the Seventh Principle, the invisible things of God are necessarily shown or revealed in various figures of speech in the Prophets. These mere *figures* of invisible things, and of things in the spiritual world, are far more grateful to the heart of unbelief, when understood of the letter only, since the things borrowed as figures are things of time, rather than things of another world, which cannot be understood and received without a great change of the soul, or a living faith in Jesus Christ.* But there are many passages of the prophecies where the figures are such as to forbid their being understood of worldly things, except by a gross violation of principles admitted to be true. In such cases, where the whole discourse of the prophet cannot be understood as primarily treating,

*1 Cor. 2: 14.

of worldly things, it is natural for the unbelieving heart to fix upon, at least some of the figures, of the same discourse as spoken of literal things, or things of time and sense only, except when spiritualized by the reader into a secondary meaning. This would be supposing the Lord to stop short, as it were, in the midst of a solemn discourse on a subject the most awfully impressive, to entertain immortal souls with mere fables, or things of no comparative importance. Such a supposed mingling of things, sacred and profane, in the preaching of God by his prophets, is eminently calculated to corrupt the whole, and to destroy its power to convert and sanctify the soul, which is believed to be the work of "an enemy" in sowing "tares" with the good seed, which is the word of God.*

PROOF of the Principle.

1. Such a digression would be diametrically opposed to the character of a God all holy, and all spiritual, while laboring to convert immortal souls by his word into his own image.

2. The rational mind is never prepared for understanding such discordant things in a rational discourse, nor for finding them in God's word.

3. Such a blending of things spiritual and secular in the prophets, would so confound and darken the way of life, that "*way-faring men*," though endowed with the wisdom of Solomon, would be led to "*err*" in attempting to walk "*therein*."†

4. Should a mere human preacher now take such a course with an audience, he would at once be considered as mentally deranged, or engaged in solemn mockery.

5. Such a supposed blending looks more like an artful

* Mat. 13: 25.

† Is. 35: 8.

device of Satan, than of the Holy Spirit, in his continued efforts to hide from the mind altogether the infinite realities of the judgment and future world, thus to blot out the great motives to holy action, and destroy the soul in hell.

EXAMPLES OF APPLICATION.

1. In one of his discourses, the Prophet tells us, that God "will create a new heaven and a new earth," being the final abode of the blessed in their everlasting rest, where also, it is said, they shall "rejoice for ever," when the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind—when his people shall be created "a joy and rejoicing"—no more to hear "the voice of weeping, nor the voice of crying." So far in the prophecy, it may seem plain to all, that the holy writer is giving a view of the heavenly state; but immediately upon this, in continuing his discourse, and without giving any notice of a new subject, he says, "And they shall build houses and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them—the wolf shall dwell with the lamb,"* &c. Instead of supposing these latter things to be real worldly promises thus mingled with things heavenly, the Principle illustrated, supposes the whole to be heavenly, and repeatedly exhibited with different figures as shown under the Seventh Principle.

2. "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to thy saints, and to them that fear thy name small and great, and that thou shouldst destroy them which

* Is. 65: 17-25.

destroy the earth." In these words, probably the saints generally will consider the scenes of the judgment, as the special subject of discourse. Then suddenly, in full connexion, the holy prophet says, "And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."* In the application of this Principle, the latter things will be understood as solemn figures of the same awful solemnities of the judgment, instead of their being an absurd mingling of the profane with the sacred, in the holy prophets. Similar examples may be seen in various parts of the scriptures, Moses, the prophets, &c., where either the promises or threatenings of God, are set forth in types which are impressive.

* Rev. 11: 18, 19.

PRINCIPLE XII.

IN making the prophetical writings quick and powerful as means of grace, God could not consistently borrow the fearful solemnities of the great day, as mere figures of earthly things.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Although there is the greatest propriety and even necessity in the prophets, of their borrowing secular things by which to typify invisible realities, there certainly does not exist that necessity for turning the rule the other way, in showing us the plainest earthly things by figures borrowed from the unseen world. Notwithstanding the plain truth of this Principle, it is believed that many parts of the prophetical writings have been thrown into darkness and made as a sealed book to the rational mind, by the practice of some, in attempting to explain those writings for the church, on the principle that the Almighty *did* thus prefigure things visible by others which are invisible.

Proof of the Principle.

1. Such a course is understood as an extreme profanation, or prostitution of holy things, which God condemns, and could not consistently practice.*

* Mat. 7: 6.

2. Earthly things can be better understood without, than with such dark figures, since the figures themselves can be seen at best, only "through a glass darkly."*

3. Such a turning of spiritual things into secular, would naturally lead mankind to think most of worldly things, and thus injure the word of God as means of grace.†

4. God does not wish us to be so interested with earthly things, as to borrow the realities of the eternal world, for types to impress them on our minds.‡

5. Such a course if practiced by the Almighty, would be like the "lies" of Israel's prophets in making "the righteous sad," and strengthening "the hands of the wicked," in its naturally blotting out, at a single stroke, both the blessed promises to the one, and the awful curses against the other.§

6. Such a practice in the word of God, is contrary to the great end for which it was written, in its natural tendency to engross mankind in worldly things, and destroy their souls for ever in hell.||

EXAMPLES OF APPLICATION.

1. In one of the discourses of the prophets, while apparently attempting most deeply to impress eternal things on the human mind, he tells of "the day" coming "that shall burn as an oven," to burn up like stubble all the proud and wicked—when "the Sun of righteousness" shall "arise" unto the saints "with healing in his wings," when they shall "tread down the wicked as ashes under the soles of" their "feet" as "saith the Lord of hosts."¶ This

* 1 Cor. 13: 12. † 2 Cor. 3: 6-12. ‡ Mat. 6: 34. § Ezek. 13: 22. || John 3: 16, 17. Heb. 1: 1, 2. ¶ Mal. 4: 1-3.

passage, and the discourse of the prophet containing it, appear to bring into-view, with as much clearness as any thing in the whole Bible, the awful solemnities of the coming of Christ in his kingdom, in "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."* And though these things are shown us in figures, the only way in which mortals can conceive of them, they have been supposed, even by many in high stations of the Church, to have been spoken primarily, as figures borrowed from the events of the judgment, to show mankind certain awful things coming to pass, before the judgment, which supposition this Principle is designed to refute.

2. Another of the prophets, on the same solemn subject, represents the sun and moon as darkened—stars falling "as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken with a mighty wind"—"the heaven" departing "as a scroll when it is rolled together"—"every mountain and island moved out of their places"—"the kings of the earth, the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains; and the mighty men, and every bondman and every freeman hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand."† The New Testament, it is believed, affords not another more solemn and awful representation than this, of the terrors of the wicked in the final judgment; and yet all these things have been supposed, even by good men, and men thought to be learned in the scriptures, as primarily setting forth the tremendous and bloody scenes of the battle of Constantine 1500 years ago, or other worldly events of a similar character,

* 2 Pet. 3 : 7.

† Rev. 6: 12—17.

and equally removed from the realities of the great day of the Lord, which is every where kept uppermost in view in the scriptures.

3. The same prophet, in another part of his wonderful vision, tells of seeing all the *martyrs and saints sitting upon thrones*—having judgment given unto them—reigning with Christ—blessed and holy—being the first resurrection—having a part in the first resurrection—beyond the reach of the second death, as priests of God and of Christ,* with a variety of other things in the connexion, equally appropriate only, to the great events of the last day, in the overthrow of all the powers of sin and hell, and glorification of all Christ's kingdom. A supposed violation of the Principle now illustrated in the perversion of this passage is, that all those solemn realities of the great day, and the heavenly state, are only used as figures borrowed by the Almighty in showing to his people a glorious and blessed state of the church militant, to be experienced for a thousand or more of literal years, somewhere between this and the judgment, supposed by them to be so far off. Our Principle rather supposes these things of the final judgment and heavenly state, to mean in reality what they say, in the final fulfilling of the glorious divine promises to all the saints, when sitting on the thrones promised them,† in reigning with Christ,‡ and judging the world.§ And although the period of "a thousand years" is annexed to this state of happiness, the principle under discussion, in harmonizing with the sixth already considered, leads us to understand this period of time as *figurative* of an indefinite, rather than a definite duration of the saints' rest, while enjoying their promised thrones; and rather than suppose so many of the glorious things of heaven to be

* Rev. 20: 4—6. † Ps. 122: 5. Mat. 19: 28. Rev. 3: 21. ‡ 2 Tim. 2: 12. Rev. 5: 10. 22: 5. § Dan. 7: 22. 1 Cor. 6: 2.

only borrowed as figures of earthly transactions, when too we are told by the Almighty himself, on this very subject, that "a thousand years in" his "sight, are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night,"* and that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."†

OTHER serious facts against the position, that the above 1000 years' reign of saints is only for this world.

1. Jesus Christ and all his apostles who must have best understood this subject, were always perfectly silent in regard to the coming of any such 1000 years previous to his appearing "the second time without sin unto salvation,‡ when coming with the armies of heaven in final battle against all his enemies.§

2. Christ, the former prophets and apostles, generally taught mankind to be always looking out for the final judgment as being then near at hand, and as not known by prophets or angels, to be distant enough for 1000 literal years first to intervene.||

3. The fulfilling of various prophecies, now seems to show the glorious coming of the kingdom of God, as absolutely nearer than a thousand years off.||

4. This prophecy, as shown in the connexion, is to be fulfilled when Christ and the armies of heaven shall come to destroy the wicked from the earth, "both free and bond, both small and great,"** which, it would seem, all must understand as showing Christ's coming to judgment.

* Ps. 90: 4. † 2 Pet. 3: 8. ‡ Heb. 9: 28. § Rev. 19: 11—16, &c.
 || See Principle 5th. ¶ See Principle 23d. ** Rev. 19: 11. 14: 18, &c.

5. To suppose the contrary would represent the blessed God as imitating the arch deceiver in the most powerful efforts to engross the human mind with goodly things "on the earth," rather than with things heavenly and eternal, which is contrary to the word of God.*

6. To suppose these 1000 years to be literal, would naturally comfort the heart of the wicked, and the backslidden professor of religion, and make the righteous sad, in calling them both as it were directly away from the great things which await them in the eternal world, and to dwell on things comparatively of the moment,† which is contrary to the Spirit's operations.

7. Such a construction of the passage before us, 'if authorized, would naturally involve us in great darkness and uncertainty, whether God has ever indeed revealed any thing in his word, to be understood as directly showing the things of the spiritual world; because, were it admitted that he is in the habit of borrowing things from that world, only as figures of earthly things, there would be no certain and clear rule of determining when those spiritual things were realities, and when mere figures of earthly scenes.

We cannot subscribe to the opinion now prevailing to some extent, that while the preceding passages, and others of a similar stamp, in Matthew, 24th chapter, and elsewhere throughout the Bible, were spoken primarily of worldly things, they may be construed also as having a secondary, third, fourth or fifth meaning, so that by their being turned into a spiritual sense, they are as useful for figures of spiritual things, as though given primarily for the latter object. Surely, this is taking a latitude with the Almighty's words, which is unauthorized, presumptuous,

* Col. 3: 2.

† See Principles XV. and XVI.

and destroying to the Bible as means of grace. It seems to suppose, that he who "is a spirit," requiring those that worship him to "worship him in spirit and in truth"* is not sufficiently spiritual in his instructions for man's spiritual interests; and that the Bible, even when most apparently spiritual, needs spiritualizing, or to be taken in a secondary sense, in order to its doing the greatest good to the soul. It must be hard to conceive how the Almighty, who condescends to "speak after the manner of men,"† with "a little here and a little there,"‡ in order to make the way of life so plain that "wayfaring men though fools shall not err therein,"§ should, at the same time, follow the practice of speaking in an ambiguous manner in his word; or as having a two-fold meaning to the idea conveyed; to be learnt or guessed out correctly where it can be done. Such a practice in *man* the Lord reprobates, requiring him not to be "double-tongued,"|| but rather to speak precisely the thing necessary to be understood and no more, in the same expression, and to let his "communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than this, cometh of evil."¶

* John 4: 24. † Rom. 6: 19. Gal. 3: 15. ‡ Is. 28: 10—13. § Is. 35: 8. || 1 Tim. 3: 8. ¶ Mat. 5: 37.

PRINCIPLE XIII.

THE continued enlightening and indwelling of the Holy Spirit are indispensable to the most clear and safe understanding of the prophecies.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

It will not be understood from this Principle that the reader must necessarily be infallibly inspired of God, in order to understand profitably the prophetic writings; but rather, that so far as he may be carnally minded, or without the spirit, he will of course keep himself in the dark, with regard to the meaning of the same spirit, who will always explain his own words best, when admitted into the heart of faith where the word of God is to be deposited, when most useful to the soul.*

PROOF.

1. In resisting the Spirit of God as the ungodly always do,† men “give place to the devil,”‡ who always perverts the word of God for them, and inclines them to love and receive the perversion.§

2. The great body of God's flock, it must be allowed, have now been long and remarkably destitute of the Spirit, compared with the measure of it received by the primitive Christians, and that which is now commanded of us all;||

* Ps. 119: 11. Jer. 31: 33. † Acts 7: 51. ‡ Eph. 4: 27. § Gen. 3: 1—5. John 8: 44. || Eph. 5: 18.

while the result is most manifest in a woful darkness concerning a knowledge of the prophecies especially, in almost all Christendom.

3. When the first Christians were filled with the Spirit, they seemed clearly to understand, love and obey the scriptures, and to feast upon them as "their" daily "bread,"* while their preaching was almost purely in the words of the Bible previously written,† which was powerful to the immediate conversion of multitudes frequently.‡

4. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned, but he that is spiritual judgeth all things."§

5. "But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost—he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."||

6. "But when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth—and he shall show you things to come."¶¶

7. "The Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God."***

Then let Zion's watchmen faithfully proclaim these truths, both by precept and example: and let her children ask for the Spirit, and receive according to the assurance of Christ,†† and no doubt, they would understand the word as well, and be as generally in earnest to hear it, as when Ezra the priest brought "the book of the law of Moses," which was found when Israel "gathered themselves together as one man,"—"to hear,"—when "Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood"—"and read therein"—"from

* Acts 2: 46. † Acts 2: 14-47. 7: 2-55. ‡ Acts 2: 41. 4: 4.
6: 7. § 1 Cor. 2: 14, 15. || John 14: 26. ¶ John 16: 13.
** 1 Cor. 2: 10. †† Luke 11: 13.

the morning until mid-day"—when "the ears of all the people were attentive to hear."* And how should all ungodly, and carnally minded professors of religion, tremble, who are resisting the Holy Ghost, with their ungodly deeds, while presumptuously explaining for themselves the solemn and awful things of God's word, so as to feed their carnal appetites and quiet them in their sins.

* 2 Kings 22: 8. Neh. 8: 1-8.

PRINCIPLE XIV.

A GODLY obedience and meditation of the holy scriptures are altogether essential to the best understanding of the prophecies.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

It is sure there never was any book beside the Bible in Christendom, of which so many copies have been published, now lying upon the shelves of the Church, requiring so much time in meditation and obedience as in this blessed book, in order to receive from it the greatest benefit; and at the same time, it cannot be denied, there never has been one so generally possessed, and called a good book, and yet so generally unstudied, unmeditated, misunderstood, and disobeyed.

PROOF.

1. It is common and natural for the most obedient among subjects, servants, pupils and children, most to love, seek after, obtain and meditate a true understanding of the precepts they wish to obey.
2. The entire contrary in all cases, is natural with the most disobedient.
3. The present long standing disobedience and neglect of studying and meditating the scriptures, together with

the consequent great blindness of Zion, on the prophecies, proves the Principle.

4. "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation."*

5. "I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts."†

6. "If any man will *do* his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."‡

7. "The wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand."§

These things, so plain in the exposure of Zion's sins, afford a most solemn admonition, which should be felt and considered by Christian ministers and others who are favored with the scriptures, especially in beholding the present dreadfully fallen condition and darkness of Israel,|| when compared with their "first," or earliest "love;" and with that "faith which was" then once "delivered to" and exercised by "the saints."¶ They admonish us also, to awake, arise, and begin at once, with all the energies of our souls, in the work of searching, understanding, meditating, and faithfully obeying the scriptures, as did the first Christians, resorting to deep repentance, prayer, the closet, the family altar, the house of worship, the Bible class, and every other help or facility within our reach, with a fixed purpose in the Lord, to understand, love and obey even those things which in the holy prophets, have been seemingly shrouded in darkness before our minds. In thus doing, we might soon truly adopt as our own words and feelings the forms of worship prepared for the faithful and spiritually minded saints in the book of the Psalms, and

* Ps. 119: 99. † Ps. 119: 100. ‡ John 7: 17. § Dan. 12: 10. || Is. 60: 2. Luke 18: 8. ¶ Rev. 2: 4. Jude 3d verse.

say with the greatest delight in the Lord, that we "have more understanding than all" our "teachers,"—and "O how love I thy law, it is my meditation all the day!"* And what will the hope of individual professors be worth, who knowing these things, persist in their refusal to do them?

* Ps. 119: 97.

PRINCIPLE XV.

EVERY interpretation of prophecy is to be considered suspicious, which naturally soothes the carnal mind, in blotting out the terrors of the Lord from a view of the ungodly, or in otherwise flattering them in their sins.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

It will be admitted by all who reflect on this subject, that the terrors of the Lord, in the awful thunderings of Sinai, have not, for a long time, constituted a popular place in the sermons of the most approved preachers in the eyes of their congregations. And perhaps no complaint has been raised against evangelical ministers, which has been more angry and bitter from the carnal mind, than that they have "preached up terror"—too much of the "judgment day"—"damnation"—"hell-fire," &c. From these complaints, or other combining causes, it seems to have come to pass, that those who would care for none of these things, are now seldom disturbed in their consciences by hearing the terrors of the Lord from any source, which they have avoided by refusing to come within hearing of the preacher's voice, when they could not otherwise avoid such solemn truths. Of course, if such persons attend on the

preaching of the word, as a general thing, it is supposed that they expect the woful threatenings of the Almighty against the wicked generally, will be left unread, unexplained, or explained so as not to appear terrible, but comfortable if possible; for instance, as in explaining the everlasting fire, into which the wicked are to be sent,* to mean the same as "the fire of God's everlasting love," &c.

PROOF.

1. It is natural for the carnal mind, which hates wisdom and loves death,† to be pleased only with false interpretations, especially of the terrors of the Lord recorded in the Bible.

2. God represents the carnally minded, even of the professedly pious, as boldly rejecting right interpretations; and, as though openly calling on their teachers for false ones, and saying to their prophets or ministers, "Prophecy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things; prophecy deceits."‡

3. He also represents the same characters as saying, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement—we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves," &c.§ Such characters then, could only be soothed with false interpretations of the great things of the prophets.

4. The wicked Jews could sit and hear Christ in a parable denouncing the most awful woes against themselves, with entire approbation, joining in the severe judgment, while interpreting it falsely to suit themselves, and applying it to other sinners, though their soothing was all taken away, and they were outrageous to lay hands on him, the moment they had a true interpretation of the discourse, as uttered against themselves.¶

* Mat. 25: 41. 46. † Prov. 8: 36. ‡ Is. 30: 10. § Is. 28: 15.

¶ Mat. 21: 41, &c.

5. The watchmen of Israel, both of the Old and New Testament, are commissioned to preach nothing soothing or comforting to sinners as such, but only, "Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him."* "And he that believeth not, shall be damned."†

7. The most hardened of the ungodly always could, and can now, sit with a soothed conscience, in hearing from their preachers repeated and awful denunciations of the divine everlasting wrath against themselves, provided they can be allowed the privilege of giving them a false interpretation, to turn the threatening away from themselves to others, as more deserving of them.

Such hardened characters, whoever or wherever they be, love to understand all the divine threatenings which come directly against themselves, such as the final overthrow and damnation of all the wicked, most awfully set forth in Isaiah, 13th chapter, and Matthew, 24th and 25th, &c., as meaning nothing more than a literal destruction of a private city or two, all accomplished thousands of years ago. According to this principle, such interpretations of those chapters are unscriptural.

Although it has been common even with the evangelical to give so loose and soothing an interpretation to a part at least, of Matthew, 24th, and its parallels, so as to make Christ keep rather the most conspicuously in view, the political overthrow of a literal city by the Roman army, soon after the Christian era; it is believed that a careful observance of admitted principles of interpreting such writings, will lead the reader to a different conclusion; and that in the whole of Christ's discourse in Matthew, 24th and 25th chapters, he intended to keep uppermost, if not exclusively

* Is. 3 : 11.

† Mark 16: 16.

in view, the awful events of the judgment at the end of the world. For a further brief notice of this part of the subject, the reader is referred to Principle XXIII., 1st Example of Application.

Since these things are so, and the ungodly are always soothed under the terrible and multiplied threatenings in the prophetical writings, when their terror is thus explained away from themselves, must we not conclude, that in the 1800 years of Christ's remaining in the heavens it has come to pass, that the original awful terrors of the Lord throughout the prophetical writings, are now almost wholly neutralized, or made soothing to the carnal mind, by popular consent in the Church, either in false interpretations, or in being left without interpretation? When we consider that during this long period of Christ's absence, the false prophet, or Satan, has been busy day and night with all the combined hosts of darkness in their efforts to seduce the flock, and injure their spiritual interests, it will not seem strange if the shepherds themselves, gradually, during so many centuries, have been seduced, so as to yield to the calls of their seduced flocks, and prophecied unto them "not right things," but "smooth things," "deceits," and "lies;" "handling the word of God deceitfully,"* daubing "with untempered mortar,"† and "promising" life to the wicked,‡ in an awfully ruinous degree; instead of always using the Bible as it is, a two-edged sword of the Spirit, piercing, quick and powerful,§ and in every part of it saying, "No peace!" "No peace!! No peace!!! But "Woe! Woe!! Woe!!!" "to the wicked."||

* 2 Cor. 4: 2. † Ezek. 13: 10—15. ‡ Ezek. 13: 22. § Heb. 4: 12. || Is. 48: 22. Rev. 8: 13.

PRINCIPLE XVI.

No interpretation of prophecy can be admitted, which would naturally make "the heart of the righteous sad," whom God has "not made sad,"* in making too little of their blessed promises of an everlasting inheritance, or in otherwise injuring the word of God as means of grace.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

By the righteous, here, we need not necessarily suppose that professors of religion are indiscriminately intended; while the word rather represents the true, active, spiritually minded and faithful saints; like Moses, Paul, John, and others, of whose fidelity inspiration informs us. To others who are also *saints*, though with less true faith, the same rule will apply in proportion to the degree of it they exercise.

PROOF.

1. Being most like God, most filled with his Spirit, and love to him and to his truth, they are so much more naturally fed and comforted with such truth, as to cause their being grieved or made sad, should their shepherds undertake

* Ezek. 13: 22.

to feed them with false interpretations, which would rather poison than feed them with such bread as their souls are prepared by divine grace to receive.

2. The saints in their various inspired forms of devotion in the Psalms, and other parts of God's word, are represented as finding great sweetness and comfort in it as truth: false interpretations of it, would, of course, grieve them.*

3. The commission of prophets or preachers, is to comfort the true flock† in giving them divine truth—therefore grievous constructions of their word could not be admissible. The saints' grief for their own and others sins, is not that kind of grief which is naturally caused by false interpretations of the words of divine truth in which their souls delight.

4. God condemns such shepherds as are in the habit of making "the heart of the righteous sad," "with lies" as just quoted, showing most clearly that those interpretations are lies which naturally have this tendency.

EXAMPLES OF APPLICATION.

1. "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments, which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God shall set thee on high above all the nations of the earth." "And all these blessings shall come unto thee—Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field—Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out."‡

* Ps. 119: 97. 103.

† Is. 40: 1.

‡ Deut. 28: 1-6.

In order to make any thing better than mere carnal indulgences of promises like these to the saints, as the gracious reward of the perfect obedience therewith connected, as the condition of their being fulfilled, we must consider them as heavenly promises, beautifully given us with types most familiar to people situated both in the country and in the city. While, therefore, the spiritual mind may be renouncing all confidence and hope in mere earthly joys in taking hold by faith of such heavenly promises as these and others like them, the pious soul would naturally be sad, or grieved, with such interpretations of these promises, as would make no more out of them, than the wicked generally possess without any faith or promise; or no more than such saints have renounced, in becoming dead to the world, to take hold by faith, of the promise which is heavenly. Probably some of the spiritually minded, at first, on reading this view of the promise by Moses, may not be ready to assent to its correctness, holding the earlier traditions that Moses spake only of Jews, and their earthly Canaan. But in the sober decision of the question, the reader is requested faithfully to weigh the several arguments in support of the view of it which is taken in the illustrations of the third Principle.

2. The same remarks are applicable to the blessings in the first part of Christ's sermon on the mount,* and to a great variety of others in the several parts of the Bible; from Genesis to Revelation, and to very many, which it is believed, have not been considered generally in the Church of late years, as any thing richer than such as may be enjoyed in the present life, as well by the carnally minded, as spiritual professor of religion.

* Mat. 5: 1-12.

Let such spiritual and consecrated saints as were Paul, and those generally of his day, be told that these glorious promises, as they would consider them, are only made to the ancient Jews, or others, for things to be enjoyed this side of heaven; while they are like Paul, in hoping for "none other things than the prophets and Moses did say should come,"* and it would at once make them sad, were they made to believe the declaration, and lead them to exclaim with Paul in such a case, "If in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."†

3. So with the solemn threatenings of God, through all the Bible against sinners; if they are so perverted and applied to the Jews only, as to take away such terrors of the Lord from the conscience of the ungodly, for whom they are generally intended, as proved under the fourth Principle, it would grieve the spiritually minded and faithful saints, who always desire the word preached in its own terrible power for the conversion and salvation of souls, understanding as did Paul, that "knowing therefore, the terror of the Lord," they are to "persuade men."‡

* Acts 26: 22. † 1 Cor. 15: 19. ‡ 2 Cor. 5: 11.

PRINCIPLE XVII.

EVERY interpretation of the Prophecies to be received, must perfectly harmonize with the letter and spirit of the gospel, or great end for which the Bible was given.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Although it might seem, at first thought, that this is too plain to admit of a question; and that common sense teaches it to every one, it is believed that, after all, there is no first principle of the oracles of God, more generally violated than this, in the interpretation of the prophecies. Should it be said in a word, that the letter and spirit of the gospel are, in substance the same as the great end for which it was given, and that this great end is the glory of God and man's everlasting good, probably all the friends of the Bible would assent to the position. But should we admit, that man's worldly or temporal good is also included in the great end of the gospel, we should find ourselves in the dark, and this very rule would fail of aiding us safely along in finding out the meaning of the prophecies. In such a case, we must look in those important writings for predictions, instructions, motives, and arguments from God, designed to promote man's *temporal* good, mingled with the same things for his spiritual and everlasting good. Then we must be at a loss continually, to know which was which,

in regard to these two very diverse kinds of good for mankind. We may all be ready to admit, that under the light of the gospel, there is always the greatest amount of worldly goods collected together by the people; still it would remain true, that the gospel's great end is exclusively for man's everlasting good, while this extraordinary hoarding up of the world, in gospel lands, has resulted from the covetous abuse of gospel light, rather than its right improvement. Suppose then the question is settled, that the great end of the gospel, so far as man is concerned, is his spiritual and everlasting good exclusively, and we are prepared for the application in deciding what interpretations should be rejected as contrary to the great end of the gospel.

EXAMPLES OF APPLICATION.

1. Those interpretations of the prophecies are not to be received, which represent God as calling off our attention from our eternal interests to entertain us with mystical histories, or predictions of the political affairs of heathen nations, since such a course in him would more naturally *hinder*, than promote man's spiritual and everlasting good, which is the great end of the gospel.

2. Those interpretations of the prophecies are not to be received, which represent God as promising his people earthly possessions, as the reward of faith; since such promises would naturally entice them to love and idolize worldly things to their own everlasting ruin, which would be wholly diverse from the great end of the gospel.

3. Those interpretations are not admissible which represent God as threatening earthly curses against his enemies as the vindictive punishment of their sins, since this would

so far blot out the everlasting curses which *are* thus threatened; all of which quiets sinners in their way to the pit of woe, hindering their conversion and salvation, which are altogether contrary to the great end of the gospel.

4. Those interpretations of the great and moving motives of the gospel, such as *life* and *death*, wherever found in the Old or New Testaments are false, which do not clearly and understandingly hold up to the view of all, the certainty of everlasting life and glory, to all the overcoming saints; and everlasting shame and damnation on the other hand, to all unbelievers; because if not so interpreted, those motives naturally fail to move sinners to repent, and be saved, according to the great end of the gospel.

PRINCIPLE XVIII.

"No prophecy [*i. e.* instruction] of the scripture is of any private interpretation,"* but is rather of general application wherever appropriate.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

1. We may understand by this inspired rule of interpretation, that all parts of the Bible, both of the Old and New Testaments, are not addressed merely to private individuals or nations, either Jews or others, but are directly and personally presented to all classes alike, in all places and ages of the world, for their personal instructions, promises, threatenings, &c., so far as appropriate to their individual condition. To understand the writings of the Old Testament as specially and directly addressed to the old Jews, and applicable only to their condition now past, and the New Testament, as thus specially addressed to the Church, or individuals, 1800 years ago, leaving others to learn out of the Bible only by inferences from instructions given to others so long since, would seem to make the scriptures of very private interpretation, and greatly injure them as means of grace.

2. The predictions of future events in the prophets, must not be interpreted as foretelling the mere private affairs of

* 2 Peter 1: 20.

individuals, men, cities or nations, as Alexander, Bonaparte, other distinguished emperors or kings, Rome, Italy—Paris, France—Babylon, Chaldea, nor of any other such private, mere political, or secular concern; while rather they relate generally to the great and everlasting interests of *all* nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, of Satan's kingdom on the one hand, and of Christ's kingdom on the other, although very properly prefigured by appropriate names of distinguished earthly existences.

PROOF.

1. "God is no respecter of persons,"* and could not of course make such unnecessary and marked distinctions among mankind, for whose benefit alike the Bible was given.

2. The universal necessity of mankind of having the Bible given thus personally to, and concerning themselves, and God's universal benevolence for doing it, is understood to establish the position.

3. There being but one revelation ever to be given to the whole flock,† under such circumstances, is further proof of the principle.

4. To understand the Bible now, as being personally addressed only to the ancient Jews, or primitive Christian churches, or as treating only of the characters and interests of others of any period who have lived before us, destroys its present power as means of grace, making it like Christ's parable to the wicked Jews of the vineyard, while unmoved they heard it, joining in its condemnation of others, until learning that it was spoken of themselves.‡ Like Nathan's preaching unto David, until his telling him plainly, "Thou art the man;"§ and like that preaching to an audience now,

* Acts, 10: 34. † Rev. 22: 18, 19. ‡ Mat. 21: 33. § 2 Sam. 12: 7.

to convert them to Christ, which should hold up before them the necessity of repentance, only for Pharaoh, Ahab, Jeroboam, Ahithophel, Pontius Pilate, Judas, and others like them who were so long ago upon earth.

5. Paul says of the Jewish scriptures, they "were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come."* This is express Bible testimony, that the Jewish scriptures were given no more personally to, nor concerning the Jews, than to ourselves and others to "the end of the world."

6. The same inspired writer tells us, that "*all* scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God, [whoever he be,] may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."† Surely, the scriptures could not be so perfect in thus furnishing "the man of God" in Paul's age of the world, nor at the present time, if given more specially concerning the ancients than ourselves.

7. The inspiration of our principle itself conclusively proves, that "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation," while every part is rather to be *generally* applied wherever applicable.

EXAMPLES.

1. The 51st Psalm must be understood as a prophecy of the scripture of a very private interpretation, if understood as written only to express the repentance, confessions, and prayer of king David the writer, "after he had gone in unto Bathsheba," as the uninspired caption of the Psalm, in many copies tells us; while every word of the Psalm ap-

* 1 Cor. 10 : 11. † 2 Tim. 3 : 16. 17.

pears as perfectly appropriate for the use of every humble and contrite child of God to the end of the world, as it could have been for the writer at the time of its being written ; and although not every Christian need confess " blood-guiltiness," as in that Psalm ; i. e., in regard to the mere external act of murdering human bodies, every one can, and should confess such guilt in regard to the blood of souls infinitely more important than the mere literal blood of the body. If that Psalm were of such a private interpretation truly, then might we draw inferences from it, and apply it to ourselves, so far as we are external murderers, and otherwise in those peculiar private circumstances of supposed guilt in the writer, and no further.

2. When the promises or threatenings of the scriptures are interpreted as designed for private individuals, kingdoms, or periods of the world, they are to be considered as privately interpreted. An example of this may be found in Deut. 28th chapter, where the final promised blessings and curses of God, are strikingly delineated, i. e., this chapter seems privately interpreted, when it is explained as setting forth only the earthly enjoyments and sufferings of ancient Jews. This is done at this day by some, in their interpretations of that chapter, in their supposition that " God is now cursing the remnant of the scattered Jews," for their father's disobedience, as threatened in Moses' day.

3. Another example of such private interpretation of the " prophecy of the scripture," is understood to exist in the interpretation of the 9th chapter of the Revelation, concerning the locusts of the bottomless pit, when interpreted to represent the comparative private ravages of Mahomet and the Saracens, fulfilled in worldly scenes which were awful,

1200 years ago, while a more general and scriptural interpretation of that chapter would understand it as showing figuratively, in the most appalling colors imaginable, the tremendous terrors and sufferings of all the enemies of God, when judged, as though to be overcome and destroyed by an army of at least 200,000,000 strong, directly from the bottomless pit, with Satan at their head, &c.

PRINCIPLE XIX.

THE words everlasting—for ever—for evermore, &c., are supposed to be but seldom used in the scriptures, except as referring, at least, to an interminable period ; and never there joined with the divine promises or threatenings, except to denote a duration which is absolutely endless.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

To arrive at a positive knowledge of the use of these words in all cases as found very many times in the scriptures, or to a conclusion, in which, all the evangelical can harmonize, may be difficult, especially where such words stand apparently disconnected with the general promises and threatenings of God. But as standing joined with such promises and threatenings, where it is of the utmost importance to determine their true meaning, it may seem that the proof is clear to all who love this solemn truth, that the words can only signify a period which is literally and positively endless in its duration.

PROOF.

1. Contrary interpretations of those solemn words in connexion with the promises and threatenings, if no where

else, would exhibit the Almighty as trifling with them, and with the solemnities of their connexions, while we all know, that "the suffering, &c., of this *present* time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."^{*}

2. Such a figurative use of those words, to signify only a limited time, if frequently practised in the Bible, would naturally throw the reader into darkness and doubt, in regard to knowing positively, when they are to be understood figuratively and when literally, notwithstanding any selected rule of determining the question.

3. The frequent figurative use of such words, to express a limited period, as sometimes interpreted, has always strengthened and always will, the unbelieving, in the favorite theory of the carnal mind, that the eternal curses of God, which are the portion of all the ungodly, will wholly come to an end, either in the present world, or in that which is to come.

4. Such a supposed figurative use of these terms, naturally blots out, or secularizes the glorious divine promises, and thus destroys the great motives and power of the gospel, to the ruin of souls.

EXAMPLES.

(1.) "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors to the utmost bound of the *everlasting* hills."[†] Instead of supposing the word *everlasting* here, to prefigure only a limited period, of the possession by Jacob of mere carnal blessings, or good things

^{*} Rom. 8: 18.

[†] Gen. 49: 26.

of the present world, as some have done, would it not be more consistent with the eternity, spirituality, benevolence, and omnipotence of God, in the bestowment of his richest blessings to his peculiar people, to conclude that by such blessings, he rather means the infinite and *eternal* blessedness which, on other occasions, he has promised all the faithful, both of the Jewish and Christian dispensation? These infinite blessings will, indeed, as represented in the passage of the example, extend to *eternity*, or “the utmost bound of the *everlasting* hills.” Surely, by these hills, we are not to understand our mere earthly hills; for if so, there would be seemingly no sense in the expression, while it is well known that *hills* of earth are no more durable than *valleys*, or the earth itself. In further

Proof that “the *everlasting* hills” here mentioned are literally *everlasting* and heavenly, other passages of God’s word may be examined, where the connexion shows at once that the words hills and hill, are used to represent the high and holy habitations of the Lord, where his greatest blessings are to be given to his people forever. “I will lift up mine eyes to the *hills* from whence cometh my hope,”* “I cried to the Lord; he heard me out of his *holy hill*.”† “Lord, who shall dwell in thy *holy hill*?”‡

(2.) “For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed *forever*.”§

(3.) “The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it—of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne—their children also will I set upon thy throne *forevermore*,”§

(4.) “Turn ye again now, every one from his evil way—and dwell in the land the Lord hath given to your fathers *forever and ever*.”¶

These, and many other parallel passages and promises,

* Ps. 121: 1. † Ps. 3: 4. ‡ Ps. 15: 1. See Ps. 43: 3. 68: 15, 16. Isa. 2: 2. § Gen. 13: 15. § Ps. 132: 11, 12. ¶ Jer. 25: 5.

set forth as enduring for a period which shall be *forever, everlasting, forevermore, forever and ever*, have sometimes been interpreted to signify only a momentary duration of existence in this world. The words "land," and "throne," of David, in the connexion, are surely no good reason for supposing the whole to be of this world, since there is so much proof that earthly things are necessarily borrowed, as types of things invisible, as shown in the preceding Principles. And is it not more natural that the Lord should use the things of time as figures of eternal things, than that he should use eternity itself as a mere figure of a hand's breadth of time?

PRINCIPLE XX.

Every interpretation of prophecy to be received, must harmonize with the reason of those saints who are both best informed and most spiritual.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

It is true that in the present fallen state of the church, there is great danger in placing any reliance upon the reason of men for the interpretation of those scriptures which naturally tear away the hope of the carnal mind. The unsanctified reason of the ungodly, aided by seducing spirits, would most naturally pervert such scriptures altogether, in making them to say "peace, peace, when there is no peace."* At the same time, it is true that human reason, when properly enlightened and regulated by the full indwelling and guidance of the Holy Spirit, will perfectly harmonize with the Holy Ghost, and with the spirit of God's word in all its parts, and will accurately discern between false and true interpretations of the scriptures. It is not supposed here that a man must be inspired, as was Paul, to enjoy this privilege; though it is believed that if the saints were now as spiritually minded, as consecrated and obedient as Paul was, they would naturally be led to understand those spiritual things which Paul wrote in his epistles as he did, and as the spirit did; so that their interpretations of such scriptures, so far as accomplished and can be understood, might generally be considered correct.

PRINCIPLE XXI.

Preconceived opinion respecting the meaning of the Prophecies, however popular or long maintained, cannot be admitted as a safe rule of interpreting those interesting and powerful scriptures.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

It might seem that any position so clear, would not need mentioning in this place. Still, in the present fallen and yet conceited state of the great mass of the flock of God,* it is believed that however plain the principle is, there is now none more generally violated.

And probably there is now no rule of interpreting the scriptures, even by the better part of the church almost generally, which is more used than their preconceived opinions, especially when believing themselves sustained in such opinions by the pious and the learned of the fathers. How tenaciously such strongly established opinions were held a few years ago, and are yet by many, in regard to the long popular use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage. The same might be said of many other questions upon which preconceived and popular opinions were very much established, concerning which they have undergone a great change within the last few years. This shows that opinions, however unyielding and

* Rev. 3: 17.

strong, are no safe rule on which to rely, concerning any subject so big with interest to the church, as a right understanding of the prophecies.

Since there is at present, evidently so much reliance on such opinions, concerning the meaning of the prophecies, there is probably nothing more in the way of that great, apostolic and Bible reform which is imperiously demanded of the church, than these popular preconceived opinions concerning the meaning of the prophets. The great evil of the thing is, that those opinions have been imbibed in a remarkably fallen and depressed state of vital godliness in Zion. Opinions formed under such circumstances, would naturally correspond with the circumstances under which they were formed. And in suspecting many of them to be wrong, we need only consider that they do now, quite too generally, harmonize with a dreadful languishing state of religion, and seem not calculated, if held and propagated, ever to have any salutary effect in awakening Zion from her present apparent midnight slumberings. Were it not for things like these, in the present intoxicating worldliness of the church, which bears a mighty testimony against the power and spirituality of the preaching of God in the prophetic writings, there might seem comparatively nothing in the way of immediately enforcing the whole truth of those powerful writings upon the mind of the church, which, it is believed, would speedily result in a revival of pure religion throughout all Christendom, and the whole world, which would be more general and powerful than any which has been experienced since apostolic days, not excepting that under the labors of Martin Luther and others, 300 years ago.

Should any of us still prefer our former popular opinions on this subject, instead of loosening our grasp upon them, to examine again and embrace others, if others are better; we might do well to take a lesson from the wise man and spirit of the Lord, apparently, on this very question, as fol-

lows :—"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit, there is more hope of a fool than of him."* "The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men than can render a reason."† "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceit. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty—that no flesh should glory in his presence."‡ "Call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your Father, which is in heaven."§ "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, whose heart departeth from the Lord."§

* Prov. 26: 12. † Prov. 26: 16. ‡ 1 Cor. 1: 27—29. § Mat. 23: 9. § Jer. 17: 5.

PRINCIPLE XXII.

Profane history, though popular in the Church, is an unsafe rule on which to rely, in the interpretation of the momentous realities of the holy prophets ; and is of course inadmissible in the great work.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

While this Principle might be considered self-evident, on a moment's reflection, it is now brought forward because of the fact, that the great burden of the prophecies of both the Jewish and Christian writers, have been too generally interpreted by the historic writings of uninspired men, and men too, acknowledged as the enemies of God and his word. True, it may have been, and may be still, honestly thought, that such historians have greatly *aided* in *establishing* the truths of the Bible, though having done it unwittingly, or not meaning it when they wrote. Were the Bible truly in want of any such corroborating testimony, it might be more reasonable, in making it a rule of interpretation.

For the laying aside of profane history as a rule of interpretation, in the observance of this Principle, we present the following facts in

PROOF.

(1.) We have other sufficient and safer helps in doing this great work, and need no help from such a source.*

(2.) To place any reliance on such help, would be a great departure from the holy example of Zerubbabel, Nehemiah and others, in decidedly rejecting the proffered help of Sanballat, Tobiah, and other adversaries in building the Lord's house.†

(3.) It would be like the pretended absurd charge of the Jews against Christ, that he cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.‡

(4.) Notwithstanding many favorable opinions of such histories, in their supposed helping to establish the truth of the prophecies, there is occasion to suspect that they were designedly written, some of them at least, by the spirit of anti-Christ or false prophet, only as a fiction or fable, on purpose to destroy the spirituality and power of the prophecies, in thus pretending to establish them.

(5.) Those interpretations of the prophecies which are sustained mostly by a reliance on profane history, are secular interpretations, representing them as already fulfilled in mere worldly things; although the prophecies thus interpreted, are most clearly given as figures of the final judgment, spiritual world, &c. Such interpretations, then, do very much savor of the work of the false prophet. As an example of this, "The burden of Babylon,"|| &c., may be examined, which, by profane history, has been interpreted to have been signally and literally fulfilled in the siege of Cyrus against a temporal city; while the figures and strong language of the passage could not have been more wisely selected, for showing the final overthrow and destruction of all Satan's

* See Prin. XXIV. † Ezra 4: 1—3. Neh. 6: 1—9. ‡ Mat. 12: 24. || Isa. 13: 1—22.

kingdom, including every incorrigible sinner cleaving fast to this self-flattering interpretation.

(6.) Much of those histories carry upon their very face the mark of the beast—or evidence which is full—that they are grossly fabulous and false. This is so considered for two reasons. *First*—Because the various witnessess which testify to the same thing, in some instances, tell us a variety of things as sober facts, which at once appear monstrous, and contrary to other things known to be facts. *Secondly*—The witnesses, like those against our Saviour, do grossly and repeatedly contradict each other in their testimony concerning the same things.

SKETCHES OF SUSPICIOUS HISTORY.

I. "HISTORY OF BABYLON"—*A Sabbath School book.*

This little volume represents *Babylon* as having been 60 miles in circumference, or 15 miles square—walled all around, 350 feet high and 87 feet thick ; having a ditch surrounding the city, equal in depth and width, on an average with the height and thickness of the wall ; with an impassable marsh still surrounding the whole, three fourths of a mile wide, for the city's defence ; without mentioning the other wonders of it, given by the other writers now to follow.

II. "KEITH ON PROPHECY"—*A small late work.*

Represents *Babylon* as being but 45 miles in circumference, which is but a little more than half as large as in the other statement. Walls but 300 feet high, instead of 350—no mention of a ditch or marsh surrounding the city, as before ; but of an artificial lake around it, 100 miles in circumference and 35 feet deep ; which must have been at least 12 miles wide, if coming near the walls of the city, as the account would naturally be understood.

III. "ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE"—

Represents *Babylon* to have been 15 miles square, or 60 miles in circumference—walls 350 feet by 87 feet—no ditch nor marsh, nor lake surrounding the city, but as having a lake on one side of the city, 40 miles square.

IV. "PARISH'S ANCIENT GEOGRAPHY"—

Describes *Babylon* as 480 furlongs, or 60 miles in circumference—walls 350 by 87 feet. River Euphrates running through the centre—walls on each side of the river through the city, 350 feet high—ditch all around the city lined with bricks on each side of it, full of water—artificial lake near by, to contain the river while building the city, 52 miles square and 35 feet deep; "some say 75 feet deep"—hanging gardens 400 feet square, one above another, rising even to the top of the walls—floored with flat stones 16 feet long and 4 broad. "Mr. Wood, who visited the ruins of Palmyra in 1751, presumes to say, there is not a stone to tell where Babylon was situated," &c.

V. "BROWN'S DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE"—

Exhibits *Babylon* as having been 60 miles around—walls 350 by 87 feet—river running through the city, walled each side 350 feet high—lake dug to contain the river while building, 52 miles square and 35 feet deep, and "Megasthenes says 75 feet deep"—hanging gardens as before described, surrounded with a wall 22 feet thick.

QUERIES.—Would such a city naturally have a wholesome climate and good water, while surrounded with such a marsh? Would the land within the marsh naturally have been good for building on, apparently so low? or, did it probably rise above the level of the marsh? and if so, would the river naturally have found its way over the eminence? Would the surrounding lake, so deep and wide, naturally

have been the most economical and sure defence against invasion? or might it not rather have given the enemy an undue advantage in coming with fleets in every direction against the city? Might not the workmen have been troubled in keeping the waters out of those artificial lakes while digging them? or could they naturally have curbed them all around and under foot, so as in case of the largest square one, to have kept it dry till finished, as a cistern or reservoir, for the river, 52 miles square and 75 feet deep? Would those hanging gardens, one above another, to the top of the walls of the city, and surrounded with a garden wall 22 feet thick, naturally have had light and heat sufficient for the growth of vegetation? and would they naturally have been beautiful to a surrounding view?

These sketches are presented as a supposed fair specimen of profane history, with special reference to the magnificence, rise and fall of heathen kingdoms and cities, which histories have been too much relied on in the interpretation of prophecy. Although the individuals who compiled the several works from which those sketches are taken, have doubtless been honest, and copied correctly the writings of others, what can we think of the original writers of such history, seeing their shocking absurdities and contradictions among themselves, but that they wrote wholesale fiction? And what can we think of the fictitious or fabulous interpretations given to the prophecies by such history, except that they are the very "*fables*" against which both Paul and Peter faithfully warned the church, on foreseeing their approaching danger from that source? They say, as it would seem, to Zion's watchmen, "Wherefore rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish *fables*, and commandments of men that turn from the truth."* "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." "And they shall turn away their ears

* Tit. 1: 13, 14.

from the truth and shall be turned unto *fables*.”* “But refuse profane and old wives’ *fables*, and exercise thyself rather unto ‘godliness.’”† “Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith, so do.”‡

* 2 Tim. 4: 3, 4. † 1 Tim. 4: 7. ‡ 1 .1: 4. See 2 Pet. 1: 16.

PRINCIPLE XXIII.

The great events of the prophecies now specially fulfilling before our eyes, should be well considered and carefully compared with the types which show them, in order best to comprehend their full meaning.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

It may be considered a remarkable fact that none of the prophecies have been generally understood to come to pass, which have visibly and specially excited the powers of light and darkness to any general conflict with each other, except the first coming of Christ,* outpouring of the spirit in the apostolic days,† and, as we may say, the deadly wounding of one of the heads of the beast,‡ (Popery) in the reformation of Luther's time; although the deadly wound is now fast healing, according to the prediction. It is true that various others have been thought by some to have come to pass, as recorded in profane history—such as of Alexander, Cyrus, Mahomet, Constantine, Bonaparte, the Pope, &c. Although it is apparent that popery is a part of anti-Christ, or powers of darkness to be revealed, these things separately, are all of them of private concern or of

* Isa. 53d chap. &c. † Joel 2: 28—32. Acts 2: 17, &c. ‡ Rev. 13: 3.

private interpretation, even were the truth of those histories not doubted. More than this, it is sure that if those prophecies have been fulfilled in such private and mere political affairs, they have not answered that purpose as means of grace for the church, which would naturally be expected of them, since it must be allowed that the prophecies were designed as special means of grace. If it be admitted, according to the foregoing Principles of this work, that the prophecies were given for the *spiritual* and *everlasting* benefit of mankind, predicting things of such a tendency, on their being fulfilled—that they treat mostly of the latter-day state of the church on earth—general judgment—future world, &c.—then it would follow that the rise and fall of literal heathen kingdoms, recorded in *profane history*, have *not* been the fulfilling of the prophecies, and that of course, they are not yet fulfilled, except in the few particulars just mentioned. And if so, then most of the great events of prophecy are yet to be fulfilled, to the astonishment, great excitement and interest, either for the better or worse of all classes, just before, or at the final coming of Christ and his kingdom. But in the present predicted midnight darkness and sleeping of the wise and foolish together, none, of course, have been sufficiently awake to witness and understand it, in order effectually to raise or join in a cry—“Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.”* And under these circumstances, it will not be strange even should many voices be lifted up in the predicted cry, if the church, as a body, should sleep on, paying no special regard to it, until some of the more waking and vigilant of their brethren are found to be actually sealing their testimony to the truth with their blood in martyrdom; when the church must be made to hear and awake throughout all Christendom, by the “lightnings, and voices, and thonderings, and an earthquake, and great hail,”† of

* Mat. 25: 1—10. † Rev. 11: 19.

persecutions and other events in connection with these things, either just before, or at the coming of Christ in his glory.* Were it not for the prophecies believed to be now specially fulfilling, in the long unmolested midnight slumbers of Zion, or Israel, as just referred to, their "hard hearted refusal to hear even the Almighty†—their being more brutish than the ox in their backwardness to "know" and "consider;"‡ and their want of a call from God himself to "come and reason together" with him|| on the subject; there might be reason to expect the most immediate awakening of the elect, (if there be yet "faith on the earth,"§) to behold and "be astonished"¶ at the magnitude, in the sight of God, of the predictions of the holy prophets, and the extent of their present fulfilling before our blind eyes, as no preceding age has ever equally witnessed.

EXAMPLES OF PROPHECIES FULFILLING.

I. ABOMINATION.—"And they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate."*** "And he said, son of man, go in and behold the wicked abominations that they do here."†† "He said also unto me, turn ye yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these,"‡‡ "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place."|||

The church might all see now, would they but open their eyes, that these very abominations are brought into the Jerusalem of God; yea, the inner temple of his house, or church, to a most astonishing extent; making it as "desolate" of the spiritual treasures and adornings which it possessed 1800

* Mat. 24: 7—9. † Ezek. 3: 4—7. ‡ Isa. 1: 2, 3. Deut. 32: 29. Ezek. 12: 3. || Isa. 1: 18—20. § Luke 18: 8. ¶ Jer. 2: 12, 13. Ezek. 3: 15. ** Dan. 11: 31, &c. See Dan. 12: 11, &c. †† Ezek. 8: 9. ‡‡ Ezek. 8: 13; see whole chap. ||| Mat. 24: 15.

years ago, as seemingly could be foretold or imagined, with regard to Zion's "first love;" and her "faith once delivered to the saints," when they were dead to the world, having consecrated themselves, their property, their children, and all to the Lord, seeking heaven, and heaven only, for themselves and others; keeping themselves entirely free from all the abominations which are since introduced into the house or church of God; all having the mind of Christ, and being constantly ready to meet their Judge by martyrdom, or any other way of divine appointment.*

The abominations now in the Lord's house, or church, which are understood as the fulfilling of the prophecy, it seems, have been gradually and imperceptibly there accumulating for some centuries past. And while they have continued to increase, undisturbed and unsuspected, they have been as the invisible serpents of the bottomless pit, preying upon and devouring the vitals of the church, until within perhaps eight or ten years past. Since then they have begun to be exposed, more or less, to the view of some, one after another, as shown to Ezekiel in vision, at his digging through the walls of the temple, to expose the long secret abominations there committed, worse and worse, as he went from one apartment to another in his discoveries.† As a reason for believing this vision to be a *prophecy*, and of the present *abominations* of Israel, instead of a *history* of the literal temple just as it existed in Ezekiel's day, it will be recollected that there was no literal temple at that time. Ezekiel was "among the captives" at Babylon, "by the river Chebar," when he had the "visions" of this book,‡ after the house of the Lord had been burnt.§ Of course the abominations then foretold, and now supposed to have come to pass, are beginning to be seen with astonishment in the

* Acts 2: 41—47. 4: 33—37. † Ezek. 8: 1, 18. ‡ Ezek. 1: 1. § 2 Kings, 25: 9.

Lord's house, temple or church. [See *temple* and *house* under Principle I.]

List of these Abominations now appearing.

Drunkennes—Profaneness—Sabbath-Breaking—Domestic Slavery and other oppression—Marriages with the ungodly—Neglect of the Church's children—Pride—Envy—Hatred—Backbiting—Human butchery in war—Sectarian Divisions—Popery—Lewdness—Covenant-Breaking—Epicureanism—Gluttony—Popular Suicide by Dress—Bible Perverted or neglected—Gross Heresies—Covetousness, and “Abominable Idolatries.”

Among the reasons for renouncing the traditions supposed to be somewhat popular, that these predicted abominations were fulfilled 40 years after Christ, in the abomination of the Roman army under Titus, surrounding Jerusalem to destroy it, as a judgment upon the wicked Jews, the following are offered :*

1. Such an interpretation is understood to violate about every one of the Principles believed to be established in this work ; and also all “first principles of the oracles of God.”

2. So wicked a city would not naturally have been distinguished by the Almighty, by the appellation of “*the holy place*,” as done in the connexion.

3. The Roman army *surrounding* the city could not be said to stand *in* the city at the same time, if, indeed, the city *had* been “the holy place.”

4. A heathen army in readiness to execute divine vengeance upon the hypocritical enemies of God, would not naturally have been spoken of by him as so great an “abomination of desolation,” as the abominable desolations of sin and Satan, which are given in the preceding list, and

*See Mat. 24: 15, &c.

are supposed to remain comparatively yet unrebuked by the church, in the sacred enclosures of the Lord's house.

5. The history of Jerusalem's destruction by Josephus, in supposed fulfillment of these solemn prophecies, for reasons assigned under Principle 22d, is not admitted as a rule of interpreting this prophecy; and if it were, the signs of its approach given by Josephus, are altogether different from those given by Christ to precede the fulfilling of this prophecy.*

6. Christ in saying, "this *generation* shall not pass till all these things shall be fulfilled,"† did *not* say that all should be fulfilled in that *age*; because he appears rather always to have used the word "*generation*," to signify a people, a class, a race, or a genealogy, as in the following instances:—"An evil and adulterous *generation*."‡ "This wicked *generation*."|| "O, perverse *generation*,"§ "This sinful *generation*."¶ "The children of this world are in their *generation*, wiser than the children of light."** Thus it may appear, that although the word "*generation*" occurs thirty or more times in the New Testament, it uniformly represents a genealogy or race, rather than an age or thirty years, as it is now common to use the word. And besides, those scenes of the judgment†† did not come to pass in that age, and will not until the son of man shall come "with power and great glory," &c. If we attempt to understand the word "*generation*," in its connexion as above, to signify an age, the whole subject is confused, dark, inexplicable, unmeaning and contradictory; and the threatenings of the Gospel are very much covered in mystery; but to understand it to signify a

* See Josephus' works, Vol. III. book 6, chap. 5, and Mat. 24: 7—15, 29—31. Rev. 6: 12—17. † Mat. 24: 34. ‡ Mat. 12: 29. || Mat. 12: 45. § Mat. 17: 17. ¶ Mark 8: 38. ** Luke 16: 8. †† Mat. 24: 29—31.

race or genealogy leaves all rational, plain and powerful, as means of grace.

7. Christ, in saying that some of his disciples then standing there, should not "taste of death till" seeing "the son of man coming in his kingdom,"* is understood to have then predicted the glorious display of himself, with Moses and Elias on the Mount, seen by three of the same brethren who had stood in hearing of the prediction, which event took place but six days after, as explained in the very next verse,† while John, one of the same three, did not taste of death, as it is agreed, until 60 years still later, who had then a most striking sight of the final coming of Christ with the armies of heaven, and other various awful particulars of the judgment.‡

8. Twenty years, as the time is generally computed, after said destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the same, or equal "*abominations*" were foretold by the same Jesus, as being then still future, as though not fulfilled twenty years before by the Roman army against Jerusalem.§

9. The *apostles* foretold the same apostacy of Zion, or *abominations* of the temple of God, which the church was to experience, and connected them with "*the last days*," which last days certainly did not pass away 1800 years ago.§

II. DAMNABLE HERESIES.—"There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in *damnable heresies*—and many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."¶ "And many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many; insomuch, that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect,"**—"and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth."†† These

* Mat. 16: 28. † Mat. 17: 1. ‡ Rev. 19: 11—21. 21: 1, 2. § Rev. 17: 1—5. § 2 Thess. 2: 2—4. 2 Tim. 3: 1—5. James 5: 3. 2 Pet. 3: 3. Jude 18th verse. ¶ 2 Pet. 2: 1, 2. ** Mat. 24: 14, 24. †† Rev. 13: 14.

and various other parallel passages, foretelling deceptive and damnable heresies, introduced into the church by the beast, anti-Christ, false prophet and false prophets,* would seem naturally understood as foretelling the same one great event, believed to be now fulfilling, and already accomplished to a much greater extent than in any age before, since these predictions were given.

Instead of supposing these damnable heresies and deceptions of the false prophet to have primary reference to the very gross and open delusions of illiterate and obscure imposters, pretending to be prophets, who rising up for the moment in drawing away unstable souls; the language of the prophecy leads us to understand it of something far more extensive and general in its coming to pass, since it is said, apparently, in relation to this deception and heresy—"And all the world wondered after the beast."† "And as the deception was to be so powerful," "if it were possible," as to "deceive the very elect,"‡ it certainly seems most natural, to understand it, not as having primary reference to the mere theory of religion, or abstract doctrines, as expressed in the uninspired creeds or platforms of the different sects of the Christian church.

This damnable heresy and deception has been so powerful, as in a great measure to cause a prevalent opinion, even among the evangelical of the different sects, that there could be no heresy among their members so long as all continued their adherence to the articles of their several creeds.

Under these circumstances, there seems to have been a forgetfulness, that however much truth they have embodied in those articles, it is possible that it may all be held "in unrighteousness;"§ so that after all, persons may hold even damnable heresies, while tenaciously vindicating their own uninspired articles of faith. Neither would it be strange if

* See Ezek. 34: 2-10, &c. Jer. 23: 1, 2. Isa. 56: 10-12.
† Rev. 13: 3. ‡ Mat. 24: 24. § Rom. 1: 18.

many had gone as far as to suppose there could be no important *doctrines* of the Gospel, except those already embraced in their articles ; while it is a truth of inspiration that the whole of Christ's sermon on the Mount is "*doctrine*," and such *doctrine* too, as "*astonished*" the multitude who heard it.* Every theory and practice, then, in the church, which is contrary to the pure, spiritual and self-denying *doctrine* of Christ's sermon, and other parallel parts of the Bible, must be heresy, and damnable heresy, just in proportion to their sinfulness, and the mischief they naturally accomplish. And would all denominations now consider that sermon as though all embodied in their own articles of faith and practice ; and would they scrupulously adhere to it in all things, no doubt they would be better guarded against heresy, than when leaving such sound doctrines almost wholly out of their articles, and disregarding, as they do, the spirit of them, as professedly placed in their covenants.

While sectarianism prevails, and is tempting the several sects to substitute in a great degree, certain mere abstract opinions or sentiments of their own choosing, instead of the holy belief and practice of the doctrines and precepts of Christ, in his sermon and elsewhere, it can probably be assailed, and turned away most happily now by the holy *examples* of those who most deprecate the mighty evil, together with giving that kind of instruction concerning it, which shall naturally turn Christians of every sect directly to the full understanding, love, obedience and faithful study of the holy scriptures, as their exclusive rule of faith and practice in all their moral actions. When this is done, the saints will be one, and not before. As to damnable heresies in the church, it might seem that a mere split among true Christians, concerning abstract sentiments which are not essential to salvation, will finally appear like trifles, in comparison

* Mat. 7: 28.

with that theory and conduct now more or less visible among all sects, which denies and sets at naught the great doctrines of Christ, every where taught in the Gospel. Then why will not Christians of every order, admit at once that the dark catalogue of abominations and crimes, now tolerated or suffered in the church, with exceptions too few, as already enumerated, are indeed "*damnable heresies*;" and that while sustained in the church, they will prove the damnation of thousands sooner than an honest mistake concerning a mere abstract opinion, or manner of expressing it, will damn an individual. These heresies, both of theory and practice, though not contrary to uninspired creeds, are at open war with the creed taught by Christ, and the ten commandments, and are so much the more "*damnable*," as their principal abettors and supporters are quoting and perverting the Bible in order to sustain their heresies.

III. SPIRITUAL FAMINE.—"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord."* "Our skin was black, like an oven, because of the terrible famine."† "The daughter of my people has become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness; the tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst; the young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them."‡

Although some may have understood these and other passages like them, as foretelling mere temporal famines, rather than a famine of the soul; such an interpretation, surely, is a most clear departure from the very letter and spirit of the Gospel, which things, if taught in the Bible, would, of themselves, naturally famish unto death every soul attempting most

* Amos 8: 11—14. † Lam. 5: 10. ‡ Lam. 4: 3, 4, &c. See Lam. 2: 10—12, 19. Joel 1: 9—20.

to feed upon them. Besides, God being aware of this very propensity in man, to think more of temporal than of spiritual bread, and more of a temporal than of a spiritual famine, has carefully qualified and explained the figure of the predication; and tells us plainly that it is "*not* a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord."

Should others, in admitting it to be a spiritual famine, consider it as foretelling the destitution of the words of the Lord somewhere beyond the bounds of Christendom; it may be recollected that those who are unconverted, and have never tasted of the good word of life, can not be said to hunger and famish for such bread, like others, who are the saints; but not properly fed with the pure bread of life contained in the Bible. Besides, it would make the word of God comparatively useless, to suppose it to pass over the spiritual wants of those who have it, to discourse upon the mere destitution of it in countries not yet having received it; a circumstance which, it would seem, all might know without a revelation of it from God.

The spiritual mind would rather understand the prophecy of the spiritual famine, as being *in* Christendom, *in* the church, where the *letter* of the Bible is abundantly possessed; and where, also, souls are famished for the want of properly receiving it as their daily bread. And may it not be queried here, whether it is not even probable, that a very large proportion of Paul's instruction concerning *bread, milk, meat and meats*, as offered to idols, &c., are figures of the food which is designed for the *soul* rather than the body; and even in many instances where common consent may have supposed they were of carnal food only. And might it not be that the bread which was once broken and eaten with gladness and singleness of heart, from house to house daily in praising God, was the broken bread of God's word, for the saints who then had so good an appetite for it, rather

than their common meals or daily reception of the Lord's supper?*

But in regard to the coming to pass of the spiritual famine, as the subject of this prophecy, can it not be said in truth, in view of the church's present terrible declension, and abominations just mentioned, in great comparative ignorance and neglect of making the words her daily and joyful meat, that her "skin" is now "black as an oven because of the terrible famine"? Or could we rationally suppose a condition of the church, so numerous, and with such multiplied privileges of the Gospel, where the fulfilling of this prophecy could be more palpable than at this day, and during a long period which has preceded us? And are not the shepherds of Israel during the present and past ages, prophetically and unsparingly rebuked by the Almighty, in view of this very evil, by means of the holy prophets?†

IV. SEALED BOOK OPENED.—"For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep—and the vision of all has become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, read this I pray thee; and he saith I cannot, for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, read this I pray thee; and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord saith, forasmuch as this people draw near me, with their mouth and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men."‡ &c.

How literally and generally, in all Christendom, it seems this prophecy has already come to pass, which, by means of the false prophet, has doubtless been gradually and imperceptibly increasing for ages, so that now the great mass of the wri-

* Acts 2: 46, 47. See 1 Cor. 3: 2. 10: 3. Col. 2: 16. Heb. 5: 12—14. † Isa. 56: 10—12. Jeremiah 23: 1—4. Ezek. 34: 1—31. ‡ Isa. 29: 11—13.

tings of Moses, the Prophets, the Revelation, and other parts of the scriptures, so far as they are prophetical, are treated so much like a sealed book, both by the learned and unlearned, that they are not now dispensed to the church as her spiritual food. Under these circumstances, it is apparent that the church, perhaps for ages, has been taught in the things of godliness more by human instructions, than directly from the Bible. And is it not now a sober fact, and one that should astound the whole church of God, that so far as her children are learning the fear of the Lord, it is taught them, ninety-nine-hundredths of it, at least, "by the precepts of men," rather than as it should be, clearly and positively from the oracles of God. Only consider how the Bible is neglected, misunderstood, or secularized, and what a flood of human religious productions has been pouring in upon them of late years, as a substitute for the Bible, which was alone the food of the first Christians—and we shall be furnished with the means of knowing, in part at least, how this prophecy has been fulfilled in such a sealing of the Bible.

Other passages foretel a period when this book shall again be received by the church as no longer sealed, but as an open book. "And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness."* This passage, it will be seen, being in the same chapter with the other, which mentioned the book as though "sealed," must be understood to relate to the same subject, and in view of a time coming when the book shall be understood by the church as open to her view.

Another instance of the same prophecy may be examined, in the vision of Ezekiel, in his eating the "roll of a book," as commanded by the Lord—his finding it "as honey, for sweetness," and his afterwards going "in bitterness" to declare it to a "hard hearted" Israel.† The same prophecy

* Isa. 29: 18. † Ezek. 2: 9, 10. 3: 1–14.

is found in the Revelator's vision of eating up "a little book open," from the hand of the angel just come "down from heaven;" his finding it to his "mouth, sweet as honey," but immediately making his "belly bitter," in being called to "prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."*

If this be a prophecy, as it might seem, of a period preceding the coming of Christ's kingdom, when the whole word of God, as comparatively now a sealed or lost book, shall be received and truly eaten up by the church on earth, as her spiritual food, is it not true that she would find this peculiar sweetness in it? And could she not then adopt, with sincerity, the inspired forms of her devotions? "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart."† "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they, than gold—sweeter also than honey or the honey-comb."‡ "How sweet are thy words unto my taste; yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth."§ And should the church truly enjoy this blessedness, with the blessed word, would there be any other way than for her to go forth-with, again to declare it both in letter and spirit, faithfully, to "many nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people?" Would not such a work naturally be attended with a peculiar "bitterness" of outward trial and temptation, considering the present prepared state of the enemy's camp? Would it not be well worthy of this little space in prophecy? And might not then the words of another prophecy be literally and more signally fulfilled than ever yet they have been? "The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those that published it."§

V. TEMPERANCE REFORM.—Whether this reform was, or

* Rev. 10: 1—11. See 2 Kings 22: 8. Neh. 8: 1—8. † Jer. 15: 16. ‡ Ps. 19: 9, 10. § Ps. 119: 103. ¶ Ps. 68: 11.

was not, ever designed to occupy a place in prophecy, to be understood for the strengthening of Zion, in its coming to pass; two things in relation to it are now certain; one of which is,—that intemperance by strong drink, like a mighty rolling flood, carrying with it a host of kindred evils, was sweeping over all christendom, and had well nigh succeeded in utterly drowning, or destroying the Christian church;—and the other is, that within the short period of eight or ten years, the whole kingdoms of light and darkness, have begun to experience a shaking which commenced in the propagation of the doctrine of entire abstinence from the use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage.

Were such a prophecy given, it would no more naturally have been clearly understood as such, before its coming to pass, than the events of Christ's first appearing, before their being witnessed. Of course, should such a prophecy actually now stand on the sacred pages, it would not be strange should the Church have thus far agreed in explaining it of something entirely foreign to this subject.

Since these important events have so far come to pass, should we now look any where in the prophets for a *prediction* of them, our minds would naturally be led for one instance of it, to Jeremiah, 35th chapter, which speaks of the whole house of the Rechabites and their children; of their pledge of total abstinence from wine (intoxicating drink) "for ever;" and of their abiding by it; also, of their not building houses, nor planting vineyards, nor having any such things; but as strangers dwelling in tents, and to stand before the Lord "for ever." The spirit of all this seems like that of faithful Abramam, in his sojournings as a stranger in the world; like that of the first Christians, and like that yet to be exercised by the Church, should they ever indeed again obtain "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."*

* Jude, 3d verse.

Another place to which we might look for such a prediction, is the first chapter of the prophet Daniel, where we find the pledge, or purpose, of four choice and excellent young Israelites, or children of God, in the midst of a nation given to idolatry and drunkenness—that they will drink none of the king's wine, nor eat any of his meat.* This pledge, understood as a religious and consistent pledge against all stimulating and improper meats and drinks, or in favor of strict temperance "in all things," they sacredly maintained; notwithstanding the fears of Melzar and the prince which was over them, that they would be famished in the undertaking. The result of their pledge and keeping it, was their better health and fairer countenances, "than all the children which did eat the king's meat," while God also "gave them knowledge and skill in all learning, wisdom," &c., besides their subsequent great promotion in the kingdom, and wonderful preservation from injury in the den of lions, and burning fiery furnace.†

Although in the whole Church, from time immemorial, these two chapters may have been understood as, without any room for a question, mere scraps of history, there can be no impropriety, especially under the present state of things in the Church, in the query, whether, after all, the Holy Ghost might not have been prophetically speaking, figuratively, of the spiritual and future interests of the Church in those chapters, rather than giving a mere literal history of secular and past events, mostly in relation to a dark nation without a knowledge of the true God? If the question must stand as irrevocably settled, that those two chapters *are* such a history; then it is settled also, that the temperance reform was not foretold by any of the prophets; but should it finally appear that they are prophetic of events then future, the question might arise, what other

* Dan. 3:1, &c. 5:1—4, &c. † Dan. 2:48, 49. 3:19—27. 6:16, 22, &c.

great event in Zion yet before our eyes, or already come to pass, would so well harmonize with them, as the total pledge of the temperance reform, so far as it has gone in fulfilling the much greater things there mentioned, than what is yet done in the church in regard to temperance in all things? Should we conclude to look at the subject in this new suggested light, it would exhibit the prophecy or the type, as harmonizing with the things of the temperance reform, so far as already fulfilled; while such an interpretation would harmonize also, with several of the preceding supposed established principles of interpreting the prophecies. It would harmonize with the 2d, that Babylon, in the prophets, usually signifies the kingdom of antichrist; the 5th, that the prophets knew not that the judgment was then far enough off, to enable them to foretell the rise and fall of successive heathen kingdoms; the 7th, that the prophets wrote their visions of spiritual things in figurative language; the 8th, that they generally wrote of the spiritual, rather than the secular interests of mankind; the 9th, that they generally wrote of future things, rather than a history of past events; the 13th, our want of the Spirit to understand correctly; the 14th, our want of obedience to understand; the 15th, that interpretations must not sooth the carnal mind; the 17th, that all interpretations must harmonize with the great end of the gospel; the 18th, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation; the 21st, that preconceived opinion is no safe rule of interpretation; the 22d, that profane history is no safe rule of interpretation; the 23d, now illustrating, that events of prophecy at present fulfilling, should be compared; the 24th, that the Bible must be its own interpreter, &c. But in understanding those two chapters as a history of past events, these several rules and others supposed to be generally admitted, must apparently be set at nought.

These suggestions, perhaps new to many minds, are

now thrown out, not to decide this great question for others, but rather, that others, and especially the true friends of temperance, and of all necessary reform in Zion, may examine it, somewhat in the light of its having been shown to the writer, that they may severally decide it for themselves, on principles, if possible, to them self-evident, without any reliance upon the *new* opinions, or long standing *traditions* of fallible men, and then act accordingly.

6. GOSPEL PROPAGATED. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come."* "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come."† "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying, fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come."‡

These predictions, together with the previous commission of Christ to the Church, to "Go — into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,"§ will probably be understood by all the saints, as foretelling a period previous to the coming of the kingdom of God, and in close connexion with it, when the gospel shall be faithfully carried out, and preached, both in the letter and spirit of it, as extensively as is specified in the command and prediction, although there is no prediction that it shall be believed and obeyed so extensively.

These predictions are now fulfilling, especially in the spread of the *letter* of the gospel, as it never has been done before, since the command was given. It is comparatively but a short time since the discovery of the press, as a facility for doing the work; and a much shorter time since any system of means was put in operation with which to do it. And now, in the year of our Lord, 1837, we can

* Mat. 24: 14. † Mat. 10: 23. ‡ Rev. 14: 6. § Mark 16: 15.

join in the resolutions and efforts of Bible societies, which for some few years have been adopted for furnishing every family in the world with a copy of the Holy Scriptures, though we might all lament that these resolutions and efforts, are so far from being as holy as the scriptures. Still, under their want of sanctification, it has pleased the great Head of the Church, so far to forward this blessed work, as to cause the scriptures to be already translated, as supposed, into almost every language on the face of the globe, and more or less carried abroad accordingly; while things are in train, or preparing for accomplishing the whole work with great comparative rapidity at least, if not literally as fast as an angel could "fly in the midst of heaven." And although the state of vital godliness is so low at present, in all christendom, and the gospel is yet spreading only in the letter of it, as it were; is not the way also preparing, with equal rapidity, according to the prediction already considered of the "sealed book opened," when there must be a general awakening and coming to life of the dry bones of the whole house of Israel,"* to a state of apostolic holiness, which would suddenly preach the gospel in its true *spirit*, even to the fulfilling of another of the predicted signs of the coming of the Son of man, which is, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another and shall hate one another."† These persecutions also seem to have commenced, or are rapidly approaching. That, surely, will be truly a sifting or trying time with professors of religion. And must we not conclude, from all these and other predictions parallel to them, and what our eyes now behold, such as have come to pass, since the days of our fathers, and very recently too, that the glorious coming of the kingdom of God, is now, indeed, "at the doors?"‡

* Ezek. 37; 1—13. Mat. 24; 9, 10. † Mat. 24: 33. ‡ Rev. 3: 20.

OBJECTION ANSWERED. Should it be said, on the other hand, that these predictions have no reference to things future, or now fulfilling, and that they were all accomplished near 1800 years ago, and before the literal destruction of Jerusalem, in the preaching of the gospel by the apostles, to "all the Roman Empire," then called "all the world;" the following reasons are presented against admitting the objection :

1. It was not the manner of the Lord Jesus Christ, to call the mere Roman Empire, "all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people," as contained in the prediction.

2. Christ did not then send his angels with a great sound of the trumpet, and gather together his elect from the four winds, and from one end of heaven to the other, as stated in the connexion, to be done, when the gospel is so preached.

3. He did not then *come himself* "with power and great glory," as he foretold on this being done.

4. "The end of the world,"* and "hour of" God's "judgment," did not then come, as is to be the case, on such a predicted preaching of the gospel.†

5. Such an interpretation of this prophecy, naturally destroys the force of the command to the Church, to go *now* and do this work; and in various other ways, injures the prophecy as means of grace.

6. The prediction of this event, written by John, 20 years as agreed *after* Jerusalem's historic destruction by Titus, proves conclusively, that it was not fulfilled 20 years before its being so predicted.

7. The several arguments on one of the preceding pages in proof, that the Roman army was not "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel, the prophet," and afterwards by Christ and the apostles, will also apply here, as the two subjects are inseparably connected.

* Mat. 24: 3.

† Rev. 14: 7.

PRINCIPLE XXIV.

THE Bible must be its own interpreter, in all cases, aided by the Spirit of God, common sense, and such other helps as cannot mislead the faithful student of the scriptures.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

ALTHOUGH the Bible is to be its own interpreter, there are other "helps,"* which are not to be rejected. But as it was in the building of the Lord's house by Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, there are two sources from which helps are offered here; and of course two kinds of help which have, no doubt, been used in the interpretation of the prophecies. These helps being as opposite in their character and influence as light and darkness, Christ and Belial, need always to be examined and known before being admitted as our helps, or expecting any direct help from them. As we are not to believe every spirit, but to "try the spirits, whether they are of God,"† and as Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light,‡ in his work of deception and perverting the scriptures, it is sure that every help offered from this source, though it may be most congenial to the carnal mind, ought to be rejected as something which would mislead us; while, on the other hand, every help coming directly from the Spirit of God, or spirit of truth, when under-

* 1 Cor. 12: 28. † 1 John 4: 1. ‡ 2 Cor. 11: 14.

stood, may be safely received, as something which would *not* mislead us.

Although Satan and all helps from his spirit, would always mislead if they could, it is true that they do not always accomplish their end. It is believed, however, that in the latter ages of the Church, they have done it, to a degree, which would be astonishing, were the fact understood as it is.

But in a few words now to be said in reference to visible helps, it will be seen, at once, that the interpretations of the scriptures, by the acknowledged ungodly, or men having not the Spirit of the Lord, whether expressed orally, in public or private; whether in sermons, exhortations, prayers, periodicals, commentaries, or other professedly religious books, or histories, are all dangerous helps in the interpretation of the Bible. Being only the production of a wrong spirit, however much human learning there may be with them, they would naturally mislead, unless counteracted by an opposite influence. Even the commentaries, sermons, prayers, periodicals, and books of the pious; and such as we may severally pronounce orthodox in the faith, are not one of them to be trusted as a safe help; because, just so far as their authors are not guided by the unerring spirit of truth in preparing their opinions, they are dangerous and might mislead. Still, by making the Bible, Spirit of God, and common sense, our sole guide, we are not wholly to reject the best human helps where we need them, since in this careful way, we may obtain more or less help from them; and to reject them altogether, for their fallibility, would be to reject the ministry of reconciliation which is an appointment of heaven, though greatly abused in this age of the Church.

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION which are palpably

false, on a careful examination, though generally hidden from our view, and unsuspected like the serpent in the grass, should be sought out, exposed, and rejected altogether, because it is plain that they are directly from Satan, and only "lie in wait to deceive;" while there is much reason to believe, that this has been the great source of mischief in the present sealing up of the prophetic writings, so far as mostly to destroy their benefit as means of grace designed for the Church. By these false principles, I mean such as in every case, would be the exact opposite of any of the 24 which are designed to be established in these several illustrations. Those false ones would be better understood, were they all written out with plainness and fullness like these, which are given to repel them. Without their ever being thus written out by others, or without thus writing them ourselves, we may see them in imagination as though written, and beware of them accordingly.

BIBLE REFERENCES would probably be as great and safe a help, as could be expected from the hand of man, in searching the scriptures, were they selected and arranged by one of suitable powers and cultivations of mind, at the same time filled with the Spirit of God, and most thoroughly versed in a knowledge of the scriptures. But this help may also have its opposite, in the labors of those of opposite qualifications, in their selection and arrangement of references professedly parallel and explanatory, which would mislead rather than guide the mind aright. And as to references now extant, the writer knows of none which, in his view, will so far harmonize with the general spirit of the Bible, and these Principles of interpreting the prophecies, as those arranged in the *Polyglott Bible*, and since published in various sizes and forms, for general circulation, by the American Bible Society. While, like all other hu-

man productions, this arrangement of References, must be supposed to be imperfect; yet, as they have the appearance of being prepared by a spirit or spirits, so much like the spirit of the scriptures, and having, as it would seem, a very perfect knowledge of the Bible, there is seemingly reason to hope, that, should all be furnished with *these* References in their Bibles, and diligently use them as they have need in searching the scriptures, more help might be derived from them than from all other published helps separate from the Bible.

In saying thus much in favor of the References of the Polyglott Bible, it is not designed to recommend the pages of PROFANE HISTORY bound up with its large octavo copy, professedly to assist in its explanation, telling the reader of polished hewn stone in the walls of the temple which was demolished at Jerusalem, "25 cubits long, 12 cubits wide, and 8 cubits thick," &c. Its

MARGINAL READINGS from other translations, although in many instances of variation from our English version, give interpretations apparently more according to the spirit of the Bible, while in some others, it is believed, they are farther from it. And as relates to the

CONTENTS of chapters in the Polyglott, and many other copies of the Bible, a part of which may have been treated as inspired, it is questioned whether any of them are so, while in very many instances, their apparent sense, is directly at war with the spirit of the chapter which they are given to explain. Indeed, their spirit seems so different from the Polyglott *Reference* arrangement, that the same hand could never have prepared them both. With regard to

COMMENTARIES now extant, it might be said, that, notwithstanding the acknowledged piety and learning of their authors, and their usefulness in the discussion of *practical* and *doctrinal* subjects in their works, their writings on

the *prophecies* too generally betray the fact, that they have been more or less misled themselves, by the incautious adoption of principles of interpreting those writings, which are unscriptural and opposite to most of these now illustrated. Had they lived in this late day of greatly increased light from the signs of the times, they might have been the first in their faithful labors to set us right on these very subjects; and would not object to our now looking more directly to the prophecies and their present fulfilling, for instruction, than to their opinions imbibed fifty or a hundred years ago, under such signs of the times as they were then witnessing. In view of

OTHER NECESSARY HELPS, it may be said that a proper degree of *time, patience, perseverance, prayer* and *self consecration* to God in all things, are indispensable in the study of the Bible. Without at least, a ten-fold increased degree of these kinds of help, in addition to what is believed to be now quite common in Zion, it seems, she must remain lamentably ignorant of the Bible and of herself; whatever other cheaper and more acceptable help she may obtain. And is it not pitiful, as well as highly criminal, in the sight of God, that even his professed children should seemingly find less delight, in reading and receiving the word of God, the only bread on earth provided for their souls,* than in their secular employment? And that, as an almost universal custom in the church, they do actually spend less time daily in the solemn reading of the Bible, than in the gratification of their sensual appetites in eating their perishing meat, regularly three times a day?

The author considers himself to have received special help, from persevering labors in the midst of heavy cares, three years ago, in perfectly committing to memory, and meditating day and night, the whole book of Revelation,

* Mat. 4: 4. Deut. 8: 3.

and several other prominent chapters of the New Testament prophecy; and from carefully comparing the whole, over and over, with common sense, and especially with the *few things of the Gospel which remained*,* on the subject, clear to the understanding, of the church generally. By this process, of examining those portions of prophecy, they seemed gradually to open, until nearly their whole contents, appeared, with few exceptions, capable of being understood. After this, without anticipating further help from the same labor, to his great and agreeable surprise, those thoroughly studied parts of the prophecies, seemed at once, on reading the Psalms, Isaiah, and other prophets, as an invaluable *commentary*, perfect and sure, in most cases, in a satisfactory exposition of them, which before were shrouded in Egyptian darkness; human commentaries having been laid aside two years and a half.

In further helps to make the Bible its own interpreter, it must be studied in connexion with itself. Every passage not already established by unerring principles should be examined by a faithful comparison of it with what precedes and follows after. For instance, the promise that Christ shall have "the heathen" for his "inheritance," being followed in the next verse, with a declaration that he shall rule them with a rod of iron, &c.,† shows that the passage promises no good to sinners, but rather victory to Christ in the destruction of all his enemies,‡ the promise also, that "all shall know" the Lord, &c., will be explained by the preceding verses, not of the conversion of all the ungodly to the Christian religion, but of the final and glorious happiness of all the true saints, when God shall have put his law in their "inward parts, and written" it on their hearts, and they shall be his people, and he will be their God, when "they shall teach no more",—saying know the Lord, &c."

*Rev. 3: 2. †Psalms 2: 8, 9. ‡See "heathen," under Principle II.

The *subject* of the holy writer in the discourse, should be understood, or the principle object which he had in view. The time, place, and other circumstances in which he wrote, so far as can be ascertained, will sometimes aid in settling hard questions, — for instance, as Ezekiel's being "among the captives by the river Chebar," at Babylon, after the burning of the house of God at Jerusalem, as already referred to,* proves that his vision of abominations in the Lord's house must be figurative and prophetic, rather than literal; when there was no such literal house standing.†

Parallel passages, which are clear, should be sought out and brought to establish others which are more dark, and if necessary, the whole chapter or book should be carefully consulted

In short, the prophetic and other parts of the Bible, should be interpreted by the same rules and principles which we naturally observe in the interpretation of a letter, discourse, or book of a human author, so far as there can be any parallel between the importance and circumstances of the different communications.

* Ezek. 1: 1. 2 Kings 25: 9. † Ezek. 8th chap.

